

TABLET

UNACCEPTABLE
SEXUAL ABUSE
CHARACTERISED BY A LACK OF
EMPATHY
AND COMPASSION
SWEPT UNDER
THE CARPET
UNSYMPATHETIC
BETRAYAL
MANIPULATIVE BEHAVIOUR
SORROW
ISOLATING
LIMITED
RESPONSE
CONFLICT
AND SHAME
A SORRY
HISTORY
NEGLECT
TURNED A
BLIND EYE
GUILT
WEAKNESS
ABUSIVE
FAILURE
CATASTROPHIC MORAL
FAILURE
LITTLE PROGRESS
LACK OF COOPERATION
PASSES UNDERSTANDING
100
ALLEGATIONS
EVERY YEAR
3,000
INSTANCES OF
CHILD SEXUAL
900 COMPLAINTS
APPALLING
ACCOUNTS

Voices of survivors

As IICSA reports on abuse
in the Catholic Church,
Catherine Pepinster listens
to the victims' stories

Denis MacShane
Does Biden's victory
signal the end of populism?

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**PRESIDENT-ELECT
JOE BIDEN**

PART OF THE PROBLEM AS WELL AS THE SOLUTION

Donald Trump's wild and reckless behaviour since losing the presidential election has only emphasised that the norms and conventions of democratic politics serve a purpose. One such convention is to know when you are beaten, and say so; and then be generous to your opponent and assist in a smooth transfer of power. Not only has he widened and exacerbated the divisions in American society that already existed, but he has created one of his own: for or against himself. To his allies he is a saviour; to his opponents, a dangerously unhinged demagogue. It is vital that his legal challenges to the result are processed fairly – and rapidly.

Now he has become one of the problems that his successor, only the second Catholic president in the history of the United States, will have to contend with. Joe Biden will take over in the midst of a political and legal crisis as intense as Trump can muster, with growing unemployment, racial tensions higher than for decades, and – even with an effective vaccine now on the horizon – an epidemic that has killed nearly a quarter of a million Americans and which will still be wreaking havoc on human lives and on the economy well into his presidency.

But there is another issue that the election highlighted. Very large numbers of Americans were attracted to Trump's coarse and disruptive take-no-prisoners style of politics because they have been deeply alienated by the way the political establishment, Democratic and Republican, has

tended to conduct itself. Biden is one of the most experienced politicians in the US and knows how to pull the levers of government. He has the grace and gravitas that Trump conspicuously lacks. But he is also a creature of that political establishment. Is he self-aware enough to realise that he is part of the problem? His approach to politics is rooted in his Catholic beliefs and the social teaching of the Church, with the goal of serving the common good and upholding the dignity of every human being. If he can convince ordinary Americans that this is what drives him, along with a deep patriotism, he may start to heal that distrust. It will not be easy. Factionalism is deeply embedded.

The American psyche has two sides to it, and in the recent presidential race the world has been shown both of them. On the global stage, historically we have seen the US swivel from leadership to isolationism and back. The 2020 election was another such transition, and in January the US will rejoin the concert of nations in their efforts to control climate change through the mechanism of the Paris Accord.

Biden's victory will be good for globalism, but the globalisation of the world economy needs radical reform. It has left too many people behind, impoverished and resentful. Many voted for Trump because they thought his anti-globalist and protectionist programme would protect their jobs and livelihoods. Can Biden lead in the construction of a globalised economy that works for ordinary people and not just wealthy elites? Or is that a contradiction in terms?

**CLERICAL SEXUAL
ABUSE REPORT**

THE CHURCH STANDS SHAMED AGAIN

Leaders of the Catholic Church in England and Wales repeatedly failed to recognise and address the serious harm done to victims and survivors of sexual abuse by priests, according to the report of the statutory inquiry into institutional abuse published this week. The essence of the charge is that while senior figures acknowledged the existence of abuse and indeed of the harm it did, what was lacking was empathy and compassion – and a sense of urgency. For a Church which preaches the Gospel, where empathy and compassion are of the essence, that is a lamentable conclusion.

The latest report by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) completes a set of inquiries into specific areas of the Catholic Church's life. It finds systematic lack of leadership, and names Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster and president of the conference of English and Welsh bishops, in particular. He does not deny it. It quotes him saying last year: "We humbly ask forgiveness ... for our slowness and defensiveness and for our neglect of both preventative and restorative actions."

Nichols appears to have undergone a conversion of heart when he encountered the raw anger of abuse survivors during the visit of Pope Francis to Ireland in 2018. Earlier IICSA reports had found his record as a diocesan bishop responsible for safeguarding policies in Birmingham and Westminster to be seriously deficient. What these reports have not fully appreciated is the extent to which the Catholic Church was ill-suited to respond to a shameful collapse of sexual discipline within the clergy, with more than

900 priests, monks and lay church workers implicated in some form of abuse. It accurately describes how the clerical establishment closed ranks, putting the Church's reputation and the pastoral care of perpetrators above the needs of abused individuals. It does not begin to explain how a body like the Catholic Church had reached a point where it could so seriously betray its own most sacred principles.

Nevertheless, Nichols' plea for forgiveness seems to have been heeded by Pope Francis, who has decided not to accept the cardinal's resignation which he was obliged to submit last Sunday, on his seventy-fifth birthday. It might have been even better had the Holy See waited for IICSA's verdict. It came on the same day the Vatican published its report into the career of ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, following a comprehensive scrutiny of who in the Church knew what, and shows how high officials failed to pick up on, or chose to ignore, warning signs that McCarrick was a habitual abuser both of minors and adults. Pope John Paul II, who trusted his intuition regarding McCarrick, turned out to have made a disastrous mistake. But clearly the attempt to use the McCarrick affair as a weapon against Pope Francis has failed.

The Nolan Report in 2001 urged the Catholic Church in England and Wales to aspire to "become an example of best practice in the prevention of child abuse and in responding to it". Two decades later the Church again stands shamed, while those it hurt so badly are still far from forgiving it, as today's letter in *The Tablet* demonstrates. It remains to be seen whether the bishops can begin to put their own house in order.



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Hopes are high that President-elect Joe Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris have turned the tide of populism

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Some of those who gave evidence to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, whose latest report published this week deals with the Catholic Church in England and Wales, here describe the physical, psychological and spiritual anguish they have endured / **By CATHERINE PEPINSTER**

Voices of suffering and survival

ON A SPRING morning in May 2018, three people walk through the cemetery at Wonersh seminary in Surrey. They approach a gravestone with an inscription dedicated to “a wise priest much loved by his family and all who knew him”, but they carry no flowers and offer no prayers. One of the three is Deirdre McCormack, cousin of the dead cleric, Canon Dermot Fogarty, and she and a second person, who is filming, watch while the third, carrying a sledgehammer, begins to smash the stone.

Piece by piece, it is demolished. Nobody comes running to stop them, or calls the police to report this act of desecration. The seminary and the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton agreed that McCormack could organise the destruction. For Canon Fogarty, who had been a senior cleric in Arundel and Brighton, a teacher at Wonersh and a parish priest in Midhurst and Chichester, had been guilty of an even greater desecration: the violation of a child.

In 1987, Stephen Bernard was 11 years old, and Fogarty, a trusted priest, invited him to his presbytery on the pretext of giving him personal tuition in French and Latin. For years, there was a pattern of behaviour: Fogarty would take Stephen upstairs, rape him and then return with him to the living room, where Fogarty would demand that Stephen make his Confession. The abuse eventually stopped, but the suffering continued.

Stephen turned to drugs, suffered mental illness and made a number of suicide attempts. As Stephen, now an academic at the University of Oxford, explained in his harrowing memoir, *Paper Cuts*, abuse at the hands of someone meant to be *in persona Christi* is not only physical but emotional and spiritual. “Fogarty was ‘in’ me in a physical sense,” Stephen writes, “but he was also ‘in’ me in a psychological sense. There was something full and all-invasive to his violation of me.”

STEPHEN Bernard’s description sums up the agony of many victims of abusive priests. Some of the survivors’ voices were heard at the hearings into the Catholic Church held as part of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), whose report was published this week. They not only endured the destruction of their childhoods and adolescence. They also paid the price of their violation for years through mental anguish, often struggling with schooling, work and personal relationships. And they lost their trust in the Church.

When Deirdre read *Paper Cuts*, she was



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

shocked and appalled. She had no idea of Fogarty’s depravity. And her empathy for Stephen came not just from an instinctive compassion for suffering so eloquently described, but from her own experience. Deirdre too had been abused, not by her cousin but by another Catholic priest.

DEIRDRE WAS older than Stephen Bernard when it happened. It was 1975. She was 21, her mother had just died, she was grief-stricken, and having a difficult relationship with her father. Some nuns Deirdre was friendly with recommended Fr Terence O’Brien to her as a counsellor. O’Brien, a Salesian, had his own house, where he met his clients, in Battersea, south London. “I came from a traditional Irish Catholic family,” Deirdre said. “I knew very little and I had not had relationships with anybody else. The nuns knew him well and held him in very high esteem. Everyone believed his claim that he was a psychologist. As well as the sexual abuse, he was using his ‘psychological expertise’ to very seriously manipulate my thinking, so I was extremely confused and frightened. He trapped me in a web so I had no way of breaking away.”

The abuse continued for nine years. Deirdre finally escaped O’Brien’s trap when she met her husband, but it was only 30 years later, reading about other abuse cases, that she recognised that what had happened to her was also abuse. She approached the Lantern Project, a charity for abuse victims that has

focused on cases involving Salesians. They helped her make sense of her experience, contact the police, and find a lawyer. “You have to summon up every ounce of your courage to disclose the abuse,” she tells me.

The bafflement Deirdre experienced during the years of abuse is something other survivors also describe. A survivor referred to in the IICSA report as A343, who was attacked by Fr John Tolkien, a priest of the Birmingham diocese, spoke of his confusion. Like Fogarty, Tolkien offered private lessons to his young victim. He was the parish priest, rather grand and well known in the neighbourhood as the son of the *Lord of the Rings* author. What was not to like about his offer? A343 soon found out. He was not only abused but manipulated: it was, he was told, a secret between him, Tolkien and Jesus.

BREAKING THAT silence is one of the hardest things that victims have to do. As the IICSA hearings were told, their stories were often not believed by other clergy, by church officials and sometimes not even by their own parents. Often they were ignored.

When Deirdre told the nuns who had recommended O’Brien about what had happened, they did not want her to pursue a case against him, nor did she get any help or sympathy from the Church’s safeguarding officials. The Salesians’ provincial did send a letter of apology, acknowledging “shocking sexual abuse at the hands of a Salesian priest”. But, Deirdre says, “he never offered me any

help or even enquired about how I was. When you have been attacked and wounded, you expect care, but my needs were not recognised. That isn't Christianity; Christianity is about protecting the vulnerable."

Deirdre McCormack's sense that her vulnerability was not a priority for the Church is an experience shared by many other victims of clerical abuse. Over and over again, they say their original trauma was exacerbated by their insensitive treatment at the hands of safeguarding officials.

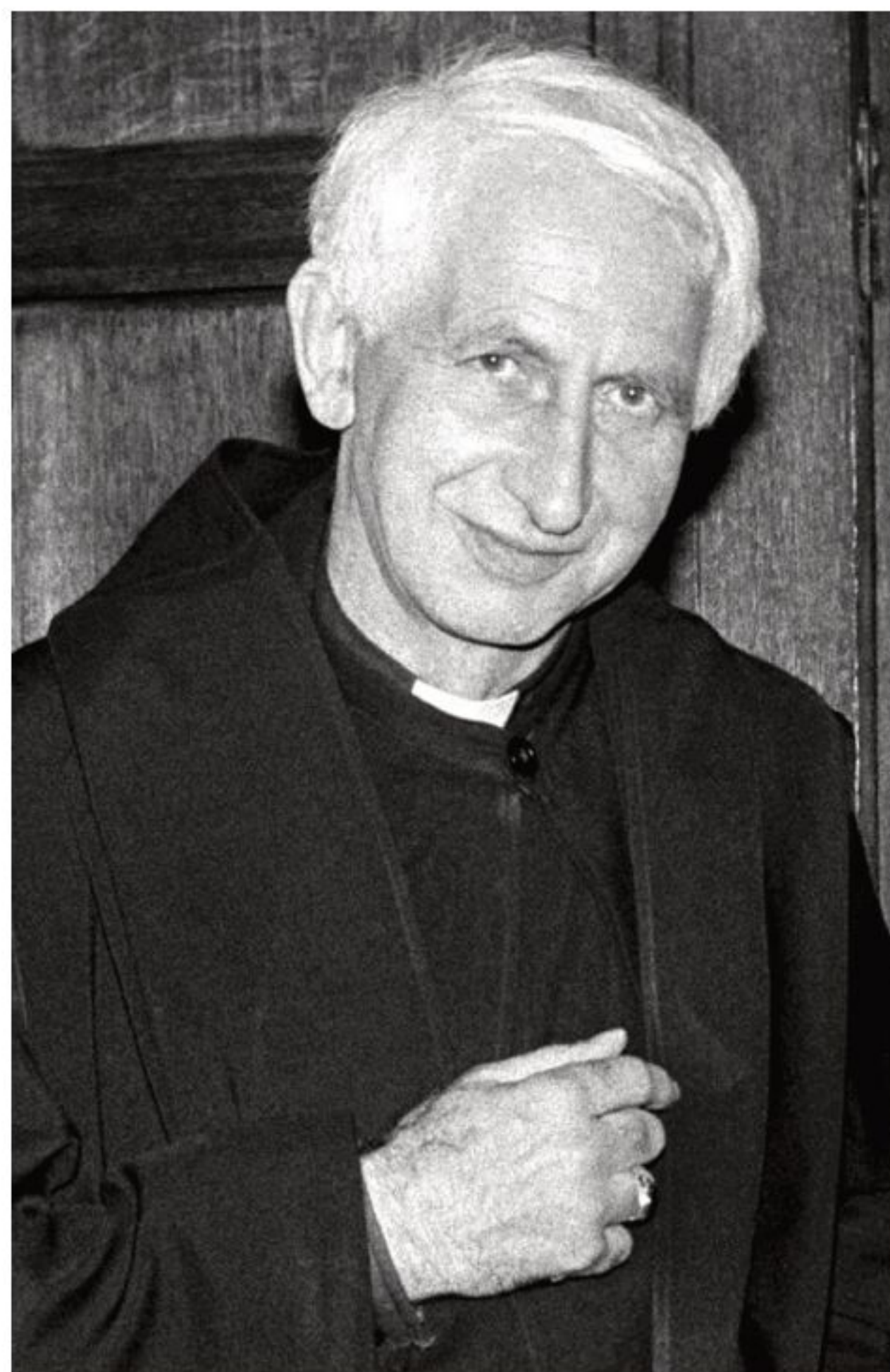
ANOTHER SURVIVOR, referred to as A711, who was abused for years by a priest in the Servite order, gave evidence to the inquiry about her ordeal, including being raped when she was 24. The inquiry heard that when she sought access to her records from officials working for the Diocese of Westminster – to which the Servite order was aligned for safeguarding – she discovered they had described her in emails as "needy" and "passive-aggressive". The then episcopal vicar, Jeremy Trood, wrote: "This woman is manipulative." Reading such disparaging terms retraumatised her, she says, as did the blocking of her requests for her papers.

"What became much bigger for me than the historic abuse was how they dealt with me. When a safeguarding coordinator shouted, 'Let me finish' at me, it triggered memories of how the abusive priest had treated me," explains A711. "I was abused as a child by the Church and now it is using its power against me again."

A711 believes that the Church only responds when its behaviour is in the spotlight. Requests to meet Cardinal Vincent Nichols, the Archbishop of Westminster, went unheeded. Then, after a newspaper reported her case, he did agree to see her. In recent weeks, as publication of the IICSA report loomed, she has found Westminster diocese officials more helpful. After six months of refusals to be given access to her case documents, the diocese told her she can see them, after all.

Another witness, A117, also told the IICSA hearings of a lack of help from Westminster archdiocese's safeguarding team. When she told them a priest whom she had taken into her confidence had merely been pastoral, and had not informed the police about the abuse she had suffered, she was told there was no policy for dealing with people trained in safeguarding who had not followed the correct procedures. "The way that Westminster works, you just get passed from pillar to post in a very insensitive way," A117 told me.

A117'S ASSAILANT was Fr Raphael Appleby, the charismatic Benedictine monk who taught for many years at Downside and whom her parents had thought would help her spiritually. Instead he sexually abused her, though she was a fragile teenager and a wheelchair user. The later treatment of her case by the Westminster diocese triggered complex and difficult emotions once more. "The [diocese's] treatment has traumatised me again and again," she says.



Far Left, the late Cardinal Basil Hume is remembered for showing empathy to survivors but offered only pastoral care and kindness.

Bernard Longley, left, the Archbishop of Birmingham, was described by a survivor as 'very kind and very different to others'. 'He had the emotional intelligence to understand what had gone on'

Occasionally there is a flicker of recognition of what victims went through. The late Cardinal Basil Hume was one such person to show empathy. A117 talked to him for many years about her trauma. But there was only pastoral care and kindness, she says, rather than an understanding that the situation required urgent intervention by the appropriate authorities.

The survivor abused by the Servite priest, A711, experienced care and concern from a safeguarding official who had once dealt with her case in the Diocese of Salford. "When she came back off sick leave she wrote a very sincere letter to me apologising for not having been able to continue with my case. When I told her how Westminster was dealing with me, she commented that this was 'outrageous'. Although no longer dealing with my case directly, she did offer support." A711 has also found newer staff at Westminster more understanding.

THERE HAVE been warm words, too, for Archbishop Bernard Longley of Birmingham. Last year the archdiocese was severely criticised in an earlier IICSA report for its handling of cases, but this year it made increased compensation offers to two survivors of abuse. One of them was A343, the victim of Fr John Tolkien, and the other was Eamonn Flanagan, who was abused for 10 years by Fr Samuel Penney, a Birmingham priest eventually jailed for abusing seven children between 1969 and 1992. A343 met Archbishop Longley, who personally apologised for what had happened to him. Clearly moved, A343 described the archbishop as "a humble man and very kind, and very different to others I've spoken to".

Eamonn Flanagan, who now lives in Australia, had despaired of his treatment at the hands of the Church, which had denied the abuse and blamed his parents for what happened to him. Then, a year ago, Archbishop Longley wrote to him. "It was the letter of someone who listened and reached out. He had the emotional intelligence to understand what had gone on," Eamonn said. He broke down as he said: "I am going to frame that letter and put it on my wall."

There are encouraging examples of good practice and kindness, but the impression from survivors is that empathy and understanding remain a rarity. The Church in England and Wales still has a long way to travel if the "One Church" approach to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk through the creation of a culture of constant vigilance is to become a reality. Instead what lingers is a sense that priests and bishops are part of a special caste that closes ranks under pressure. Time and again the IICSA hearings revealed how clergy would not move against one of their own, turning a blind eye to abuse or moving suspected abuser priests around. The comradeship continues unto death. In September 2012, Stephen Bernard reported his abuse to the safeguarding officer of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. Yet when Fogarty died a month later at 92, he was afforded a Requiem Mass at which the then bishop, Kieran Conry, officiated, and dozens of priests attended. Former bishop of the diocese, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, who concelebrated, said Fogarty "had fulfilled what every priest has to do – to teach and preach the faith from Jesus Christ, and that he did admirably with knowledge and with care". Deirdre McCormack says: "They must have known, given what Stephen reported, yet they still went ahead."

The majority of the survivors of abuse no longer attend Mass. Eamonn Flanagan made it to his mother's funeral but could not bring himself to shake the hand of the priest who officiated at the service. They have found some consolation in the IICSA inquiry's shining a light in the Church's darkest places, and allowing them to speak. They find solidarity in one another, and 20 of them have together written a letter to *The Tablet*, published this week, urging the mandatory reporting of abuse and the overseeing of safeguarding by an independent body. It is now up to the bishops to admit the wrongs of the past, and create a Church that no longer offers safe harbour to abusers.

Catherine Pepinster is a former editor of *The Tablet*.

Fundamental flaws in the culture and decision-making at the highest levels in the Church have been exposed by an investigation into a disgraced American cardinal / **By CHRISTOPHER LAMB**

The Vatican examines its conscience

THE HOLY SEE'S long-awaited report into ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick is a first in many ways. Not least, it is the first institutional examination of conscience by the Vatican of its handling of a high-profile abuse case to be made public. Few involved, including the current Pope and his two predecessors, emerge from the story with their reputations enhanced.

What makes the document unprecedented is its willingness to confront the mistake that was made by a pope and now saint, John Paul II, in appointing Theodore McCarrick as Archbishop of Washington, D.C. in 2000, and a cardinal the following year. Pope John Paul took the decision despite being aware of sexual misconduct allegations made against McCarrick. But he did so, the report explains, due to inadequate information supplied by some United States bishops, suspicions about the truth of the allegations, and John Paul's years of working directly with McCarrick.

At the time of his Washington appointment, no victim of McCarrick had come forward to the Holy See. It was not until almost two decades later that an allegation that McCarrick had abused a minor would be deemed credible, leading to his removal from the College of Cardinals by Pope Francis. Soon afterwards, after a church trial found him guilty of abusing minors and adults, he was dismissed from the priesthood.

THE REPORT, commissioned by Pope Francis in September 2018, includes striking revelations about Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, the former papal ambassador to the US. According to its findings, in 2012, a year before Pope Benedict XVI's resignation, Viganò ignored specific instructions from his Vatican superiors to investigate an allegation of sexual misconduct against McCarrick. The detail is jaw-dropping, given it was Viganò who in August 2018 took the extraordinary step of issuing a dossier alleging that Francis had mishandled the McCarrick case and calling on him to resign. The decision to launch an investigation into the McCarrick case and to make it public was made by the Pope in the wake of Viganò's allegations.

In stark and forensic detail, the McCarrick report lays bare the weaknesses in the Vatican's system for appointing bishops during the final years of the John Paul II era, exposing a systemic failure by high-ranking ecclesial officials



Theodore McCarrick meets Pope Francis at the Vatican in 2013

to respond adequately to credible allegations of sexual misconduct.

The "Report on the Holy See's Institutional Knowledge and Decision-Making Related to Former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick" was produced by the Holy See's Secretariat of State. It is an exhaustive 449-page document, with around 1,410 footnotes. It includes interviews with more than 90 witnesses and cites documents found after a trawl through the archives of the most powerful offices of the Roman Curia. Cardinals, bishops and current and former officials were interviewed about what they knew about McCarrick's rise up the clerical ranks. The report does not seek to justify the mistakes that were made, but it does try to explain why certain decisions were taken within the context of the time.

Theodore McCarrick, the report explains, was promoted to the position of Archbishop of Washington, D.C. in 2000 by John Paul II. At that time the Vatican was aware that McCarrick had been accused of sharing his bed with adult seminarians. A priest had also accused McCarrick of trying to engage him in sexual activity. In the early 1990s, anonymous letters accusing McCarrick of paedophilia had also been sent to the cardinals in the US, the bishops' conference and the apostolic nuncio. According to the report, these claims were not forwarded to Rome.

Given the rumours swirling around McCarrick, Pope John Paul had earlier decided not to promote the then Archbishop of Newark, New Jersey, on three occasions,

believing it would have been "imprudent". When the Washington vacancy came up, Cardinal John O'Connor, then the Archbishop of New York, summarised the allegations against McCarrick in a 1999 letter which was shared with the Pope.

But then the Pope change his mind.

John Paul commissioned a secret inquiry into McCarrick via the apostolic nuncio at the time, Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo. According to the report this turned out to be inadequate because three US bishops provided "inaccurate and incomplete information". McCarrick vigorously protested his innocence, while the priest accuser of McCarrick was deemed unreliable because he himself was the abuser of two teenage boys. The Newark archbishop was viewed as "hard-working and effective". All these factors conspired to get McCarrick the nomination.

The report points to another factor in the puzzle of what led John Paul to override the concerns being expressed about McCarrick. It suggests that John Paul may have been influenced by his experience as an Archbishop in Poland, when the Communist regime often tried to discredit the Church by circulating false accusations against priests. John Paul had known McCarrick for decades, first meeting him before his election as Pope, when Fr McCarrick was the personal secretary of Cardinal Terence Cooke. "McCarrick's direct relationship with John Paul II also likely had an impact on the Pope's decision making," the report states.

LATER, DURING the Pope Benedict era, new details about McCarrick's behaviour emerged which led to Benedict forcing the Archbishop of Washington to resign "spontaneously" in 2006. At this time, Archbishop Viganò was working in the Secretariat of State and he highlighted the allegations made against McCarrick. Following McCarrick's retirement, it was recommended to Pope Benedict that he open a church inquiry. But Benedict declined and opted instead to "appeal to McCarrick's conscience", indicating to him that he "should maintain a lower profile and minimise travel for the good of the Church". These were essentially informal "indications" communicated to McCarrick by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, who was then in charge of the Vatican's Congregation for Bishops.

In his 2018 dossier against Francis, Viganò claimed that after he succeeded Benedict, Pope Francis had ignored formal "canonical sanctions" that had been placed on McCarrick, and rehabilitated him as a trusted adviser. The McCarrick report shows these allegations to be false. There were no formal sanctions on McCarrick. "No one ... provided Pope Francis with any documentation regarding allegations against McCarrick," the report claims. By the time the Jesuit Pope took office McCarrick was over 80 and past the retirement age of a cardinal. The report says that given that the allegations and rumours concerned immoral conduct with adults from several years previously, which McCarrick had always strenuously denied, Francis "did



The best Masses I ever attended were in a potting shed in a garden in Cambridge

not see the need to alter the approach that had been adopted in prior years”.

In 2012, however, Cardinal Marc Ouellet, then Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, was informed by Viganò of a new allegation of sexual misconduct against McCarrick. Cardinal Ouellet explained what action should be taken “but Viganò did not take these steps”, according to the report. Furthermore, McCarrick remained active in spite of Benedict’s instructions and the report explains that “McCarrick kept Viganò regularly informed of his travels and activities”. Yet Viganò remained inert.

McCARRICK had been one of the most influential figures in the US Church. He was a networker with an array of political contacts, a globetrotter, fundraiser extraordinaire and he was close to the centres of power in both the Vatican and Washington, D.C. While his fundraising and gift-giving are acknowledged, the report concludes they were “not determinative” in the decision-making process that took McCarrick to the top of the US hierarchy.

For decades McCarrick was regarded as a hard-working, pastoral and intelligent church leader. He had first been appointed an auxiliary bishop in 1977 by Paul VI and then John Paul II chose him as Bishop of Metuchen and then Archbishop of Newark in the 1980s.

This report will be read in different ways by the different factions in the Church in the US and elsewhere. It has been a painful lesson-learning exercise. Many of the recent reforms Pope Francis has implemented to combat abuse can be linked back to the McCarrick case. In 2019, Francis widened the definition of abuse to include sexual misconduct involving adults and those in positions of power, and in a recently published handbook on handling abuse allegations the Vatican informed bishops not to ignore anonymous allegations made by third parties. Pontifical secrecy for abuse cases has also been abolished.

FUNDAMENTAL reform in the way bishops are appointed, so that candidates can be robustly assessed, and lay people given more of a say, is still required. The abuse crisis has exposed deep failures in the systems of clerical governance and highlighted the need to reform both processes and culture. Francis has been taking modest steps in the right direction. When the Pope two years ago announced a “thorough study” of what the Holy See knew about McCarrick he pledged to “follow the path of truth wherever it may lead.” The report still leaves some unanswered questions, but it is an attempt to walk down that path and is a long-overdue step towards the greater transparency that both survivors of abuse, and ordinary Catholics, have called for. It is another sign that the Church is, painfully and sometimes grudgingly, putting the years of cover-ups, denial and secrecy behind it, and trying to face up to reality.

Francis’ medicine for the abuse crisis is simple. It can be found in a dozen words from John’s Gospel: “You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”



IT’S BETTER, much better, this time round. As a result of the government’s bad decision not to allow collective worship during lockdown 2.0, we can’t go to Mass. On the bright side, we can sit in church; mine took the excellent decision on Sunday to put the Blessed Sacrament on the altar. So we sat companionably, spaced apart, in front of the host. Where two or three are gathered together ... it can be wonderful.

What was good too was the experience of collective silence. You could say that the Church is channelling its inner Quakerdom ... except the tradition of devout silence has obvious monastic roots. On the one occasion I attended a Quaker service, it was the silence that was the most impressive thing about it; without wanting to be rude, the moment the congregation started talking things went downhill a bit. I could see how silence might be the counterintuitive engine behind the Quakers’ extraordinary record of social action.

Collective silence in church makes you feel like you’re on retreat, in a good way – the whole really is greater than the sum of the parts. Which isn’t to say that worship is better in proportion to the numbers involved. The best Masses I ever attended were in a potting shed at the bottom of a garden in Cambridge, where an elderly Benedictine said Mass every morning. It was just him and me. He was so deaf, he had to leave a pause for responses, and would carry on regardless of whether I’d said my bit. But I always felt lighter and happier afterwards.

The difficulty now will be to get people back into the habit of Sunday Mass, insofar as they had it before lockdown. Religion is a habit as much as anything. Back in March, the English and Welsh bishops made a grave but well-intentioned error in allowing their adviser, Professor Jim McManus, to point out to government the risks of infection from open churches, thereby actually encouraging ministers to shut them down. Doing that voluntarily sent out the message that churches were, are, a non-essential service, rather less important than Waitrose or Lidl. When the bishops recovered their mettle this time round, it was more difficult to claim that churches are, in fact, vital.

We’ve got another fortnight of this to

go. The upside, if you can call it that, is that churches can’t open without volunteers to wipe down benches and take people’s details; an active laity is the precondition for churches functioning at all. The challenge will be from 2 December to get us to resume the habit of Sunday Mass-going as part of the necessary rhythm of life. When Mass was allowed with restricted numbers, churches had the unusual role of turning people away because they were already full. Let’s see what they look like when we go back to normal.

PETER SEEWALD’S new biography of Pope Emeritus Benedict is a book that could have done with a decent editor and a better translator. But there’s lots of fascinating detail, including the first letter by little Joseph Ratzinger. When he was growing up in Bavaria, children didn’t write to Santa for things but to the Christ Child. Little Joseph wrote in old German script: “Dear Christ Child, you will soon float down to earth. You want to bring joy to children. You also want to bring me joy. I wish for the Volks-Schott (missal), a green Mass vestment and a JESUS heart. I will always be good. Best wishes from Joseph Ratzinger.”

That trusting friendship with the Christ Child was a very good basis for a Christian life. And you know what? The vestment was for dressing up and playing priests saying Mass, which the future pope and his brother did, on their own little altar, with their sister, or the girl next door, serving. I actually knew someone who also used to play at saying Mass with his sister when he was small, except he never had the kit that Bavarian children did. It wasn’t the only sign of a nascent vocation. When he was asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, the young Joseph would say: “I want to be a cardinal.” What a boy.

THE OTHER good thing about lockdown, mark two, is that it is actually impossible to start Christmas in November. No Christmas shopping, no Christmas menus in restaurants; it’ll all have to wait for 2 December. We may, for once, have something like an Advent season.



Melanie McDonagh is a journalist and writer.

PHOTO: GER HOLLAND



SARAH CROSSAN

Prayers in her bones

The award-winning children's author talks to **Peter Stanford** about the poetics of her first novel for adults, and why she remains steeped in the Catholicism of her Irish upbringing

“HAIL, HOLY Queen, Mother of Mercy,” begins Sarah Crossan, “Hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope.” Almost without realising, I find myself joining in with her: “To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve ...” It is the only time in three decades that I can remember jointly reciting a prayer out loud in a newspaper interview, but it feels as natural as when both of us used to say such prayers as part of the daily routine of our Catholic schools.

It all has all come about because we started by talking about poetry. Crossan writes many of her award-winning novels in blank verse. So far her audience has been what publishers call YAs (Young Adults) – teenagers to the rest of us. Her first, 2012’s *The Weight of Water*, was shortlisted for the prestigious Carnegie Medal for children’s writers, as was 2014’s *Apple and Rain*. In 2016, *One* went one better and won.

And the honours have kept coming. In 2018, the 39-year-old was named as Ireland’s Laureate *na nÓg*, or children’s laureate, her

two-year tenure ending during lockdown. “It was a shock when I was asked, completely,” she recalls. “I didn’t think I had enough books out.”

Crossan’s new novel, *Here is the Beehive*, is her first for grown-ups, and once again is in verse. Where, I had started out by asking her, does the poetry come from?

“I’ve always felt really connected to poetry. People always ask me why I write in poetry and I used to have this spiel about doing *Romeo and Juliet* when I was in Year Nine and loving the language of it, but I kept thinking, it can’t be that. Because I do feel that there is something quite organic going on when I write. It doesn’t feel forced. It doesn’t feel like something learned.”

ENLIGHTENMENT came when attending her niece’s First Holy Communion. “I was standing up, sitting down, partaking in the Mass, when it suddenly dawned on me that this was in my bones. This wasn’t just something that I had been surrounded by. It was how I learnt to speak. I knew prayers before I understood the words in the prayers.”

From the poetry and alliteration and rhythms of those prayers comes her poetry. “I think the prayer that for me highlights it is ‘Hail Holy Queen.’” And then we are away.

There is a slight air of embarrassment in the ether when we finish our recitation, but, though warm and engaging, Crossan doesn’t let it distract her from what she is explaining. “The poetry that is part of that prayer,” she says, “is what makes it intoxicating. As a child I was intoxicated. I saw the Virgin Mary as – like a superstar. I didn’t revere celebrities or anything like that when I was growing up, in the way that my daughter does now. It was the Virgin Mary, because of the power of that prayer.”

Though she was born in Britain, it was only because her parents were over on holiday at the time from the family home in Dublin. Her first seven years were spent in Ireland. Even when her father’s work brought the family over to north London, summers were always spent with grandparents in Donegal or Meath.

“THE ROSARY was part of those summers,” she reminisces. “My grandad would do it every evening. The way that we children were called in was that they had a burglar alarm. So when it went, you knew it was either tea or the Rosary. And it was usually the Rosary but then the cake followed. You never forget those prayers. You learn it bodily. It is in some other part of you that’s not the intellectual part. It’s the body. The body remembers.”

Before she became a full-time writer, Crossan trained as a teacher of English and drama – “I come from a family of teachers” – and taught for a decade in England, Ireland and, for a spell, in Hoboken, New Jersey. It meant she spent a lot of time on planes. “When I was going through a difficult time a few years ago, I remember being on a plane and listening to the Rosary. It was the only thing

that would curb my anxiety, apart from medication the only thing that was going to centre me and remind me that I was breathing in this space, right now. I didn't want it to end."

Her Catholicism goes deep, yet it is also something she says she struggles with. Her schooling – where she first learnt the "Hail Holy Queen" – was at Our Lady's Convent High School in north London. "I had very liberal parents and went to a very liberal school. I had very liberal RS teachers. So I don't feel as if I experienced any of the dogma that some people I know associate with Catholicism."

There are nonetheless things about the Church of her upbringing that she cannot overlook, or put to one side. "I always describe myself, when asked, as an Irish Catholic, and as an Irish Catholic I think the Irish Church has behaved appallingly. I can't ignore what happened within those orphanages, the sweeping it under the carpet, rather than offering a very clear apology at the time."

Much has been said and written about the impact of the abuse scandal on the faith and Mass attendance of ordinary Catholics, not only in Ireland but across other once staunchly Catholic Mass-attending communities. Crossan, it is hard not to conclude listening to her, is publicly giving voice to something widespread that nonetheless too often goes unheard – the tension many face between being so steeped in Catholicism

that it is there in every aspect of life, work and (in Crossan's case) the body, but at the same time feeling alienated from the Church by some of the actions of its leaders.

There are, she accepts, no easy answers. At home in Hertfordshire, she hasn't raised her daughter in Catholicism. "Her two cousins have been, and that makes her wonder about why she is different, or why she is not part of that. Sometimes I feel sad for her that she doesn't get that because it was a very positive experience for me."

AND EVERYONE, she acknowledges, has their own perspective. "I find it problematic that all the highest roles [in the Church] go to men, but then my auntie is a nun, and she's very happy with that, and she enjoys her life. She has a great life. She is a really powerful woman. She was a headteacher at a school. So I see the reasons why people are still part of that community. If someone was to say something bad about Catholics, I would be the first to defend them. I don't know any people who practise Catholicism who are bad people, but the system is cracked."

When talking with other Catholics – as today – she admits that "I will always be the critic". It is especially true within her own family of three brothers and a sister. "I have one brother who is quite involved in the Church, as is my sister-in-law," Crossan says, "and we do have raging arguments because

I feel some part of them fails to question." She shrugs. "But then we have the same sort of arguments about Brexit. That is just the way we conduct ourselves."

Here is the Beehive is set in the Irish Catholic north London where they were all raised. Its title is taken from a nursery rhyme – "Here is the beehive. But where are all the bees? Hiding away where nobody sees." If the style in which it is written will be familiar to her fans – the pared-down immediacy that comes with telling a story in verse makes it, for this reader at least, both compelling and a thing of beauty – its subject matter, infidelity and obsession, marks a big departure. So much so that recently on social media she had to offer a health warning. "Dear Teenage Reader, Thank you for being excited about *Here is the Beehive* publishing but ... it is definitely not a YA novel."

She cringes when I repeat her words back to her. "It is not about them not being able to understand the words," she clarifies. "It is about them not being able to emotionally connect with this story. They are too young. They need to wait until they've had lots of scars."

But Crossan has not shied away from serious subjects in her previous YA books. *Toffee* (2019) tackles dementia, and *Moonrise* (2017) the death penalty. And in her two years as Irish laureate, she took on the daunt-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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ing challenge of enthusing teenagers about poetry.

“The problem with teenagers is that people think they are adults. They look like adults, so when a teenager who is a child says, ‘I don’t like poetry’, people just go, ‘OK, that’s just not what they are into anymore’. But what it really means is they have had one bad experience with poetry, and then got no more encouragement. I just wanted to reel them back in, to say, ‘You are still invited in to this thing – come and join us.’” It is a mission she plans to continue, even now that her period as the laureate has ended.

On the subject of dipping her toe in the world of grown-up fiction, she is admirably sanguine. “I always assume my books will fail. And that is the best way to be because then I am really proactive about making them as good as they can be. I don’t believe in the talent myth. I just think it is hard work and questioning yourself and never feeling satisfied.”

That sounds, I suggest, like something a teacher might say. She considers. “Maybe it is Catholic: never being good enough so constantly striving to be better.”

Here is the Beehive by Sarah Crossan is published by Bloomsbury at £12.99 (Tablet price £11.69).



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POPULISM IN RETREAT

Goodbye to all that

This has been the decade of rising populism, the most over-worked word in the political lexicon. A former Minister for Europe argues that with the election of Joe Biden as President of the United States, the tide has decisively turned

POPULISM, THE idea of a revolt of “the people” against the elites, has been the most discussed if slippery of political concepts of the century so far. The books and learned articles have poured out from the professors and the political commentariat, writes Denis MacShane.

Of course 2016 was the *annus mirabilis* for the populists. Brexit, a raw populist project, won in England, and Donald Trump won in America. Trump sent his chief strategist Steve Bannon, populism’s principal cheerleader, to Europe to shape a crusade against the EU’s animating idea that people of different nations, races and religions could live together harmoniously and more prosperously within a supranational community. Bannon pulled together the rising forces of populism, including those of Matteo Salvini in Italy, Marine Le Pen in France, the AfD in Germany, the Freedom Party in Austria and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands. They shared a distaste for migrants, for Muslims and for multicultural values, derided protections for minorities as liberal wokery, often used coded white supremacy language and, above all, denounced the European Union.

FOUR YEARS ago, populism seemed to have the wind in its sails. But something has gone wrong. Marine Le Pen was seen off by the ultimate liberal technocrat, Emmanuel Macron. Angela Merkel retained power in alliance with German Social Democrats despite all the fulminations of the AfD. Wilders disappeared as voters shunned him. In England, Theresa May, who used crude populist language about immigration and assumed the Brexit vote would be converted into a handsome majority for the Conservatives, was humiliated in the 2017 election. The hard leftist Jeremy Corbyn, with his quintessential populist proclamation “For the many, not the few”, was rejected by voters; and so was the left populist Syriza party in Greece, to be replaced by the outward-looking New Democracy party, full of clever multilingual anti-populist ministers.

Matteo Salvini was humiliated in elections this year, after he had walked out of a coalition government confidently hoping to win power in Rome. Instead, it is the Argentinian Pope Francis’ voice of protest against Salvini’s anti-immigrant nationalist populism that prevailed, and the success story of Italian politics has been an intellectual internationalist lawyer, Giuseppe Conte. Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Denmark and Finland all have social democratic prime ministers. Greens, you could argue, are the new rising force in European politics. In New Zealand, Labour’s Jacinda Ardern comfortably won a new term, seeing off right-wing nationalist populist opposition. The candidly Islamophobic Austrian

PHOTO: CNS/REUTERS, JIM BOURG



Joe Biden, right, celebrates with Vice President-elect Kamala Harris

Freedom Party suffered a major defeat in elections to control the key city of Vienna last month.

And four years on, one of the populists’ two biggest wins, Brexit, is turning out to be something of a disaster. Boris Johnson, hailed by the US President as the “British Trump”, is seeing his populist dream of rupture with Europe ebb away, as a messy compromise with the EU looms under pressure from British business. A recent opinion poll showed only 39 per cent of UK voters now think Brexit was a good idea.

And the second big populist win of 2016? Though Trump will join the elite club of US presidents who have failed to be re-elected for a second term, 70 million Americans voted for him. The populist wave that swept Trump into power four years ago remains a potent force in the US. But it has passed its high-water mark.

President-elect Biden is a long-time anti-populist globalist. He served for years as chair of the Senate’s foreign relations committee before becoming the most internationalist US vice president ever. Biden’s 1968-generation pragmatic, problem-solving, centre-left politics are the very antithesis of nationalist right-wing populism.

DEMOCRATIC politics has always been about populism in the sense of seeking majoritarian support to win and hold power. But as an explanation of what is happening in democracies, populism is running out of steam. Biden’s victory buries the professors’ favourite thesis that populism’s rise is inevitable. Political scientists, intellectuals and commentators should stop leaning on the crutch of populism as the catch-all explanation of what is happening in the world’s democracies.

Denis MacShane served as the UK’s Minister for Europe between 2002 and 2005.

Incidences of self-harm and suicide in prison have surged in the eight months since the first lockdown was imposed. **Ellen Teague** hears why from some of those who support prisoners and their families

A dark night of the soul

IN HIS PHONE calls, Linda's dad described for her the beautiful, sun-baked desert island where he was living. In fact, he was in a prison cell, incarcerated in solitary confinement and lying on a bunk bed more than 23 hours a day. For month after month, Linda pleaded with the prison authorities. Her father, she told them, was mentally ill, and needed care.

After persistent advocacy by the Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact), he was examined by health specialists and moved to a secure mental health unit. Here, staff had to cut off his clothes. A skin condition had left him covered in sores and he was pale and weak because of lack of fresh air and exercise.

Ron was among the one third of inmates who, when discharged from prison, have nowhere to call home. He was completely unprepared for the strange Covid-19 world. He had £47 in his pocket, and no face mask. When he tried to catch a bus, he was baffled when the driver told him he could not board.

Linda's dad is getting better, thanks to the right medication. And Ron, too, has been lucky. He was given an emergency welfare grant to cover temporary accommodation, food, toiletries and winter clothing by Pact. "Full credit to the prison service for stopping Covid running riot," Andy Keen-Downs, Pact's director, told me. But after eight months of lockdown restrictions, while prisoners have been kept alive, "the price has been an epidemic of mental health issues".

SINCE APRIL, most prisoners eat and go to the toilet in his or her cell. Each day they leave their cell for half an hour: a brief walk, a quick shower and possibly a phone call. The backlog in the court system is increasing, and many in detention are remand prisoners awaiting trial and "stuck in limbo". The stress on inmates and their families has been shown by a heavy increase in helpline use and a surge in prisoners – women prisoners in particular – self-harming.

The Irish Chaplaincy's Council for Prisoners Overseas (Icpo) supports Irish prisoners in England and Wales – many of them Travellers – and their families. Icpo project manager Fr Gerry McFlynn said: "The lack of movement within the prison means that prisoners find it difficult to access courses for their sentence plans or to get transferred to local prisons for the final part of their sentence." Not having face-to-face meetings with probation or benefits advisers, and lack of work, recreation and education, have caused some prisoners to self-harm.

For Fr McFlynn, the most important lesson that has been learned since the first lockdown

began has been "the importance of maintaining contact with prisoners and their families – especially the most vulnerable, elderly and 'lifer' prisoners". This is now maintained largely by phone calls and email.

All those working with prisoners and their families are worried at the increased difficulties faced by those released from prison in recent months, many of whom only have the clothes on their backs. Casual work and affordable accommodation are even harder to find. There are delays in accessing benefits, particularly for those without a bank account or ID documents. Ex-prisoners have to wait for up to six weeks before they receive any money as a claim for Universal Credit cannot be made while incarcerated. Some find themselves homeless, resorting to begging for income. "We should not release prisoners without secure accommodation in a time of pandemic and in winter," Keen-Downs told me.

Pact has given £30,000 over the past three months to people leaving prisons, for food,

masks and a place to stay. And Icpo has given nearly £20,000 in small emergency payments to ex-prisoners in the past year. "We also provide one-to-one support and mentoring to help them deal with a situation which many describe as worse than being in prison," said Fr McFlynn. "It's as much as we can do to help prisoners stay safe and well and keep up their spirits in these unprecedented times."

Casey Fox, a support worker for Anawim, a women's centre in Birmingham, told me: "My experience of supporting women in prison throughout the lockdown has opened my eyes as to just how difficult this has been for them." Even while most understand the reasons for the restrictions, they can still feel frustrated when their courses, which give them a sense of purpose and routine, are cancelled. They can leave their cells for only half an hour a day for exercise. The loss of visits from family and friends causes many "to feel as though they have been cut off from the outside world".

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**'there will be judgement
without mercy for those
who have not been
merciful themselves;'
(James 2: 13)**



How can I respond to this you might ask?

A daily entreaty to the patron of Prisoners, St Maximilian Kolbe, is a good start. Ask in your Parish if anyone else wants to join you. Remember the victims of crime. Encourage this on the Parish social media footprint.

Contact the Chaplaincy Team at your local Prison. They may direct you to a 'Penfriend' service. They may appreciate Christmas Cards for the people in their care. A valuable ministry from the comfort of your own home.

Ask the team what help they need. Those supporting HMP Manchester provide enormous consolation and hope by simply being there in prayer. What can you do?

James Gallogly
Managing Chaplain at
HMP Manchester

PHOTO: PA, JON SUPER



Prime Minister Boris Johnson on a visit to HMP Leeds last year

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

The Catholic chaplain to HMP Leeds, Chris White, is also concerned about the impact of cancelled visits. “Combine this necessary distancing of loved ones (much like the outside), with 23 hours a day in their cell (much like the outside but with very little space to roam and little in the way of entertainment sources), it is easy to see how self-harm and, in the most grim of cases, suicide, become viable options,” he said.

The Out There group, founded by the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul,

offers community-based support to families impacted by the imprisonment of loved ones in Greater Manchester. So far this year it has supported 182 people, with many anxious about the effect of lack of face-to-face visits on prisoners’ children. Wellbeing activities offered online include yoga and painting for relaxation, and cooking sessions.

The Catholic bishops have urged the government to reduce the numbers in prison by releasing some near the end of their sentences who do not pose a risk to public safety, especially if they have vulnerabilities. The anguish

of a Polish prisoner in HMP Leeds speaks for many. “I only have limited access to my loved ones due to Covid,” he said. “Phone credit is wiped out very quickly and many of my calls home involve relatives being passed the phone in turn, only to end up in tears and all of us feeling helpless.”

His usual ways of coping with his incarceration have also been affected by Covid-19. “The gym is out of action and Mass is suspended,” he said. “I am increasingly left alone with my own thoughts for company. Some of these can be constructive and reflective whilst many negative ones require a strong sense of willpower, or an intense prayer life, to combat.

“Time in prison, especially during the Covid pandemic, is like a physical version of the dark night of the soul so many of our saints and believers have suffered: one must go through the motions, even when doubts, questions and fears eat away.”

Prisoners’ names have been changed.

Pact’s annual lecture will be given by Frank Cottrell-Boyce and streamed online on 3 December. For further information visit www.prisonadvice.org.uk/event/hh2020

Ellen Teague is a freelance journalist who writes and campaigns on justice, peace and ecology issues.



‘I was in prison and you visited me’

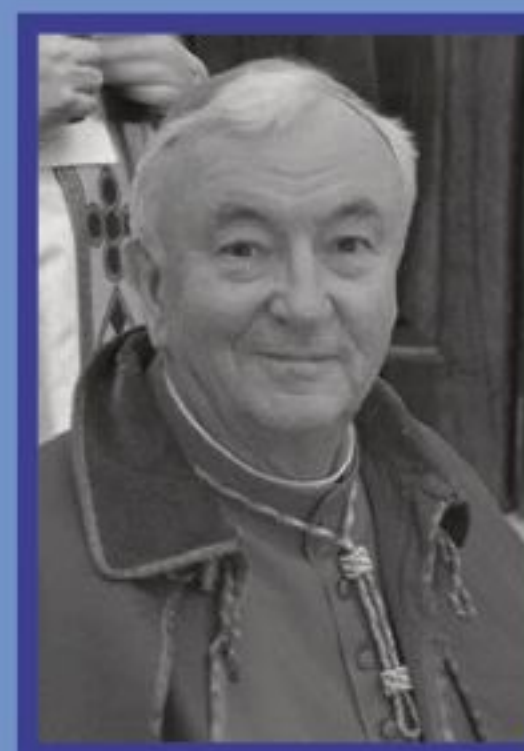
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“I pray that we may never forget all people, whoever they are and whatever they may have done, are loved by God and called to be sharers in His Kingdom.



I commend to you the work of Pact, who do so much to support those in need of hope and a fresh start.”

Cardinal Vincent Nichols,
President of Pact

www.prisonadvice.org.uk

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Unable to afford a lawyer, a former prisoner was handed a lifeline to freedom thanks to the intervention of a Nigerian Catholic non-profit welfare organisation. **Patrick Egwu** describes its workings

Wash me clean, make me whole

PHOTO: PATRICK EGWU



WHEN Michael Chibuike was imprisoned in Nigeria two years ago, he thought all hope was lost. His family is poor. They did not know any powerful people who could secure his release. And they could not afford a lawyer.

Then, a year ago, to his surprise, Chibuike was visited by a welfare officer. He listened to his story, and agreed to take up his case. Soon a team of lawyers was making representations on Chibuike's behalf to the prison authorities and the Ministry of Justice.

"I started hoping that I might be released," Chibuike said. "I was happy because I knew I was innocent of the crime I was accused of."

His visitors were from the Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace (Cidjap), an enterprising faith-based non-profit organisation under the administration of the Catholic Diocese of Enugu in south-eastern Nigeria. Chibuike had been arrested after a powerful member of his community accused him of conniving with other young individuals to attack him. Chibuike insisted he was innocent. After the intervention of Cidjap's legal team, he was released from prison and reunited with his family and loved ones.

"They were all happy to see me," a relieved and grateful Chibuike said.

Sr Chioma Onyenufoh of the Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace

Cidjap has been providing free legal services to inmates across Nigeria for more than 30 years, especially for prisoners from poor families unable to afford a lawyer. Its legal and welfare teams not only assist inmates with their legal cases but also provide welfare and counselling services. Founded in 1986 by Mgr Obiora Ike, a priest of the Enugu diocese, Cidjap's work also includes helping ex-prisoners find jobs and supporting them as they are reintegrated into society. It also lobbies for the reform of Nigeria's overstretched and underfunded criminal justice system.

"**WE ARE** pursuing social justice for inmates," Cidjap's director, Fr Donatus Onuigbo, told me. "Some of them have been wrongly imprisoned." When he and his legal team believe there has been an injustice, he says, "we seek to intervene in their respective cases as a way of setting them free."

Nigerian prisons are poorly equipped, unclean, unhealthy, understaffed and overcrowded. In some cases, 30 or so inmates are crammed into rooms meant to accommodate 10. The Enugu maximum security prison where Chibuike had been held was established

in 1915 by the then colonial government. It was designed for 650 prisoners; the number of inmates is now more than 2,000. The overcrowding is exacerbated by the large proportion of inmates who are still awaiting trial. A recent report by the National Bureau of Statistics estimates that more than 70 per cent of Nigeria's total prison population are serving time without having been sentenced.

CIDJAP'S WORK has become more important during the pandemic. Since February, more than 200 prisoners have been released through an amnesty programme brokered by Cidjap. "We are looking forward to releasing more people," said Fr Onuigbo. Cidjap works with Caritas Nigeria and other local NGOs to distribute meals, medicines and clean clothes to prisoners. "We employ the services of doctors who visit the prisoners to take care of their health and psychological well-being," Fr Onuigbo adds.

Sr Chioma Onyenufoh, of the Daughters of Mary, is the head of Cidjap's welfare department. It runs a vocational technical training centre, where prisoners learn skills and are helped to set up their own small business enterprises after they are released. More than 100 prisoners have received training at the centre since the beginning of the year.

Sr Chioma's work is supported by donations from the public, and Cidjap's ministry is also sponsored by overseas partners. Misereor – the German Catholic bishops' development agency organisation – is a key partner, and its project officers make regular visits to evaluate Cidjap's work. "Collaboration with local and international networks and organisations makes our work more professional and effective," Fr Onuigbo says. The US agency, Catholic Relief Services, supported by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention helps with supplies, preventing epidemics in prisons. "Diseases are easy to spread in prisons, so these alliances help to prevent that from happening."

MEETING THE spiritual needs of prisoners is at the centre of Sr Chioma's and Fr Onuigbo's ministry. As well as making pastoral visits to prisoners, priests celebrate Mass, and Holy Communion is brought to sick inmates and to prisoners unable to attend services. And when prisoners are released, they are offered ongoing support and counselling.

Fr Onuigbo is hopeful for the future, but does not hide his frustration that more is not being done by the Nigerian government to support the work of organisations like Cidjap. "There is a lack of implementation of prison reforms and policies that take care of the welfare of inmates," he told me. "This is what we are advocating for."

Michael Chibuike's name has been changed to protect his identity.

Patrick Egwu is a Nigerian freelance journalist and an Open Society Foundation fellow at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Alav ha-sholom

FORMER Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Lord Sacks, died of cancer last Saturday aged 72. His funeral took place on Sunday afternoon. An obituary will appear in next week's *Tablet*.

"It used to take me about 10 minutes to pass through the scanner and armed security guards at his St John's Wood home, but when I was making documentaries such as Channel 4's *Children of Abraham*, I nearly always made it my first port of call," film-maker and former Dominican friar Mark Dowd told us. "Profound, never resorting to cliché, Jonathan Sacks was the broadcaster's dream. You sat at his feet, sipped coffee and listened."

Sacks and Dowd become friends. Mark remembers sitting opposite the former Speaker of the Commons, Michael Martin MP, at one of Sacks' celebrated dinner parties. Martin kept referring to his host as "Lionel". Was he thinking of Lionel Blue? wondered Dowd. Grace before and after the three-hour dinner was in Hebrew, with an English translation. "Our ancestors got these prayers just right. Grace before, when we're all starving, is about 20 seconds, but at the end, when we've all had our fill, it just goes on and on," Sacks told his guests.



A keen Arsenal supporter, Sacks often told the story of watching a match at Highbury with George Carey, another Arsenal fan, who had just been appointed Archbishop of Canterbury. Arsenal went down 6-2 to Manchester United. The next day a national paper carried a diary item that concluded: "If the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chief Rabbi between them cannot bring about a win for Arsenal, does this not finally prove that God does not exist!"

The following day, a letter appeared in the same newspaper. "To the contrary, what it

proves is that God exists. It's just that he supports Manchester United." It was signed by Jonathan Sacks.

IN HIS "Glimpses of Eden" on 17 October, Jonathan Tulloch announced he had grown a new variety of apple, "and when I took a bite a sharp, scrumptious juiciness exploded in my mouth".

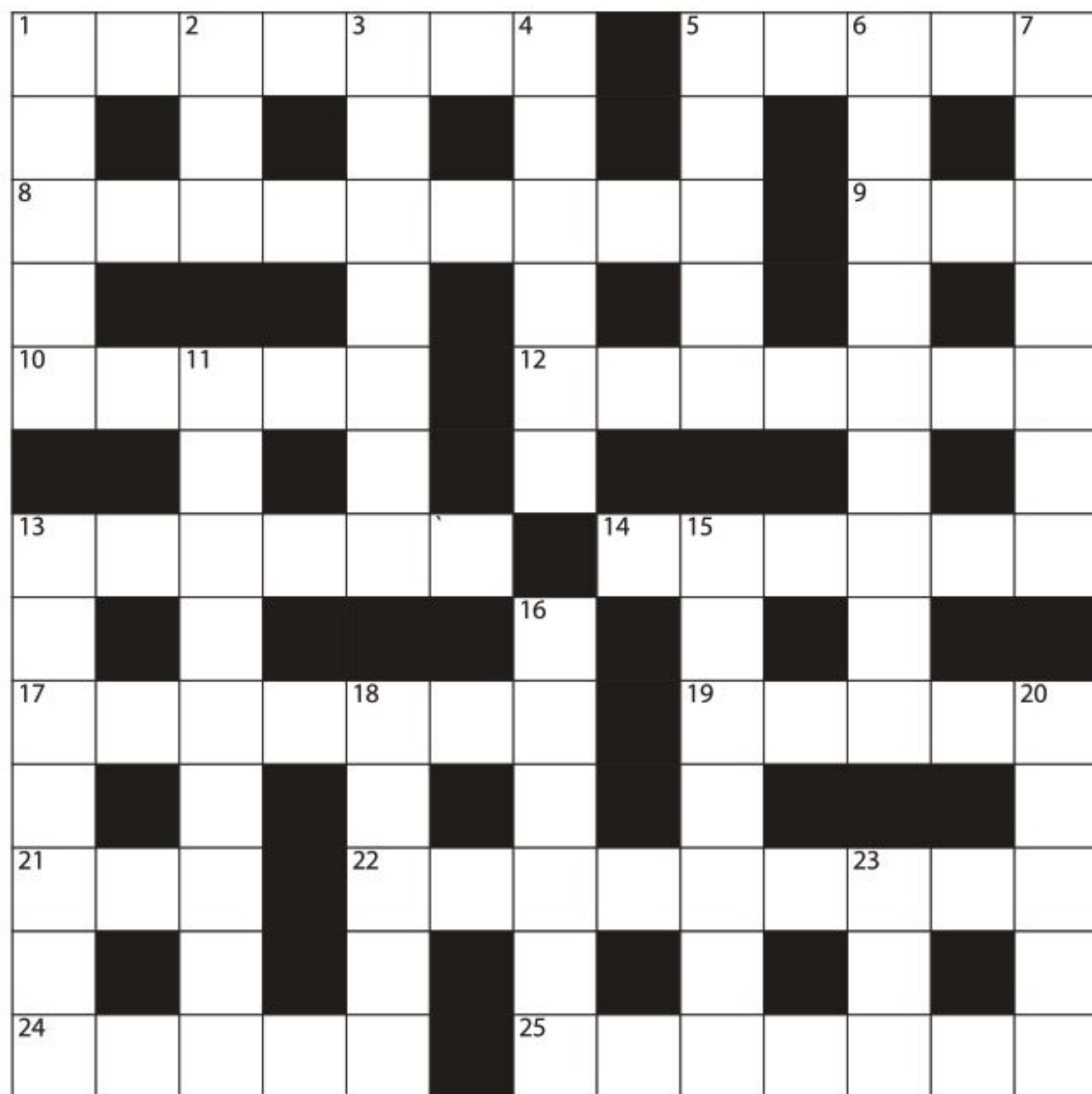
Six or seven years ago, after eating "a particularly delicious Egremont Russet", he decided to sow the seeds, and one germinated into a willowy sapling. When he visited his young tree a few weeks ago, it was laden. Its apples were definitely in the russet family. "But they were rosier, rougher and rounder than an Egremont Russet. It was a new variety."

But what would he call his "serendipitous variety"? The suggestions flooded in. Several variations on "Laudato Pippin". Fr Bernie Moloney of Emly, Co Tipperary, suggested "Russet of Eden". The nuns of Stanbrook Abbey, not far from the Tullochs, suggested "Hambleton Russet". Liz Keating of Gateshead suggested "St Dismas' Delight". "Jonathan once wrote that Dismas, the good thief, was his favourite saint," she wrote. "Like the apple, Dismas' rough exterior hid a promise of heaven."

"It's Dismas all the way," Jonathan has decided. "He knows the back way into heaven."

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 732 Axe



Across

- 1 One of Daniel's three companions in Babylon (7)
5 Progenitor of the Israelites (5)
8 Inducted into the Church (9)
9 Lao-Tzu's principle(s) (3)
10 Songs of praise to God (5)
12 Town east of the River Jordan, given to Reuben's people (7)
13 One of the seven churches in receipt of a letter from John in Revelation (6)
14 Container from which cattle or horses feed, with links to the Nativity (6)
17 Missionary (7)
19 City of the Italian St Anthony (5)
21 Samuel's teacher (3)
22 Important religious town of the West

Bank associated with 14 Across (9)

- 24 Title taken by the Pope between c.167-174, meaning saviour (5)
25 Egyptian hermit, died c. 350, feast day 4 October (2,5)

Down

- 1 Minor prophet in Isaiah's time and an OT book (5)
2 Break a commandment (3)
3 Attilio ----- (1666-1729), one-time monk and composer of oratorios; later a colleague of Handel in London (7)
4 Collection of 10 Across (6)
5 Greek and Roman name for the "Southern Kingdom" of Israel (variant spelling) (5)
6 The -----, work of Augustine of

- Hippo as a response to the sacking of Rome by Visigoths in 410 (4,2,3)
7 (Lay) member of a male religious order (7)
11 Adherent of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (arch) ... (9)
13 ... and the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, familiarly (7)
15 Vessel, as used in the Bible, possibly to store holy oil, water or blood (7)
16 Porcius -----, Roman procurator who kept Paul in prison (6)
18 Mountain in the plain of Jezreel, where Barak gathered his army (5)
20 Modern Arab capital built on the ancient capital of the Ammonites (5)
23 Son of Noah whose tribe spread into North Africa (3)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 14 November, The Tablet, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY. Email: thetablet@thetablet.co.uk, with Crossword in the subject field. Please include your full name, telephone number and email address, and a mailing address. Three books – on God, Miracles and Pilgrimage – from the OUP's Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random.

■ We cannot process entries or prizes at present. Please keep entering. Winners will be notified and prizes awarded as soon possible.

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SUDOKU | Challenging

					1	9
		4	1			8
			3		7	6
				5	6	8
	5			2		7
	3	8	6			
8			4		6	
2				1	5	
9	7					

Each 3x3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9.

Solution to the 24 October puzzle

2	6	8	3	5	1	4	9	7
7	5	3	4	6	9	1	8	2
4	9	1	7	8	2	3	5	6
3	4	7	9	2	8	5	6	1
5	2	9	1	3	6	7	4	8
8	1	6	5	4	7	9	2	3
9	8	4	2	7	3	6	1	5
1	3	2	6	9	5	8	7	4
6	7	5	8	1	4	2	3	9

Solution to the 24 October crossword No. 729

Across: 1 Benaiah; 5 Cain and Abel; 10 Eliathah; 11 Ehud; 13 Asaiah; 14 Beroea; 16 Adam; 17 Pekahiah; 19 Phoenicians; 20 Malachi.

Down: 2 Elnathan; 3 Aeneas; 4 Anak; 6 Ahisamach; 7 Ethiopian; 8 Berach; 9 Admatha; 12 Gedaliah; 15 Melita; 18 Bera.

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” – Edmund Burke

Abduction, rape and blackmail: a Pakistani teenager's fight for justice



Sumera (left) with Maira

WE CANNOT STAND BY and watch as an estimated 1,000 women and girls in Pakistan are “converted” to Islam each year through forced marriage – usually achieved through kidnapping, rape, and blackmail.

Maira was just fourteen years old when she met our allied lawyer, Sumera (pictured left), in Pakistan. At fourteen, she'd seen a lot already. Her family were forced into hiding after she escaped her abductor – but not before he'd already abused, blackmailed, forcibly married and “converted” her. “The Lahore High Court ordered Maira to return to her abductors, endangering not just her but also all Christian girls in the country,” reflected Tehmina Arora, Director of Advocacy in Asia for ADF International.

Sumera has filed a petition for the conversion and marriage certificates to be cancelled while an appeal is being heard at the Lahore High Court. But, she notes, “the authorities are often slow

or even reluctant to grant protection to these minors.”

Nobody should face violence on account of their faith. Girls like Maira need strong advocates such as Sumera to support their voice in the court of law, and to restore a measure of justice following such an ordeal.

Freedom of religion is protected under the Pakistani constitution, but cases of forced conversion are increasing. Efforts to enforce a ban on this practice in recent years have been unsuccessful. Strong international pressure is needed to press the government to secure long-lasting protection for vulnerable religious minorities.

We are working tirelessly to defend victims like Maira across the region. Locally, we engage pro-bono to secure freedom from unjust punishment and imprisonment for those who cannot afford legal support. Globally,

our team of lawyers and advocates work with international institutions, religious freedom bodies, and networks of parliamentarians to protect the rights of Christians and other religious minorities who face severe persecution for their faith. The international community must take action to prevent such extreme violations of fundamental rights.

Please help us take up this fight in the face of evil, and to never stand accused of being good people who did nothing.

The ADF International team has open legal matters in almost one-third of the world's countries. Here in the UK, the situation is very different to Pakistan. But religious groups still face discrimination.

We believe in a society where diverse views are respected, but the freedom to speak and act in accordance with one's conscience is under pressure. Increasingly, free speech is being silenced in universities and in the workplace. That's why our UK team are committed to defending freedom inside the Court, while also creating resources to enable Christians to freely live out their faith in public life. But we don't stop there.

Our team of lawyers and advocates tackle the root causes of discrimination by engaging at international political and legal institutions, including the United Nations, the European Court of Human Rights, the European Parliament. We also work alongside Member States at these international organisations to protect the values they were founded to uphold. Our presence means we are instrumental in shaping policy at the highest levels of governance. And with our global network of more than 3,400 allied lawyers, we engage in legal advocacy to promote fundamental freedoms and protect the inherent dignity of all people, all over the world.

For more information please visit our website www.ADFInternational.org

LETTERS

• THE EDITOR OF THE TABLET •

✉ 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY @ letters@thetablet.co.uk

All correspondence, including email, must give a full postal address and contact telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to shorten letters.

Betrayed by Vanier

● As I culled my bookshelf, I decided to throw out the books by Jean Vanier (“A double life”, 7 November). I had a visceral reaction: “No longer credible.” I did not know him and yet I feel betrayed.

As a Catholic woman, theologically educated and professionally employed, I find myself wondering about the “double life” of the women involved.

I wish we could hear from them. On the one hand they are responsible for allowing themselves to be duped and for allowing us all to be duped by Vanier. Yet, the Catholic Church’s continued refusal to treat women and men, lay and Religious, as equal partners in ecclesial culture and decision-making supports its cultic stupification.

I will never forget a moment after Mass when I waited in line behind three Sisters of Life to greet the new visiting superior general of the Jesuits. At their turn, the three sisters dropped to their knees in a flash, heads bowed, skirts billowing. “Father, may we have your blessing?”

At first this seemed normal. Then suddenly I saw the action for what it was. Women prostrated themselves at the feet of the male. I was stunned and deeply embarrassed. No wonder the women involved with Jean Vanier kept silent.

ANN R. KEATING
TWEED, ONTARIO, CANADA

● If you put people on pedestals, they can be toppled. God works through the flawed and it does not seem to me for us to judge Vanier; he surely suffered himself, succumbing to strong temptations those of us who have not had them cannot begin to understand.

Vanier made a major contribution to our understanding and he should be remembered for this, not condemned after his death. We all have our shadow side.

MARGARET HEATH
BATH

◆ TOPIC OF THE WEEK ◆

Abuse victims demand real change

WE THANK THE Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) for its report on the Catholic Church. We welcome its findings, highlighting the Church’s gross failures to protect children and others from abuse. We are grateful that the inquiry has exposed the Church’s treatment of victims and survivors when it comes to reparation and care, showing how the Church perpetuates an adversarial culture in its dealings with us.

The report clearly shows the Church’s lack of willingness and ability to change of its own accord. There should be no crocodile tears from the Church hierarchy, calling this report a “wake-up call”. The Catholic Church has been here before, with the Nolan report in 2001 and the Cumberlege report in 2007, both followed by broken promises and shocking inertia. The Church has had victims and survivors hammering on its door for decades, pleading with it to listen to our cries for help, to stop the abuse and to put proper safeguarding measures in place, a theme repeated in evidence given to IICSA.

Colossal amounts of charitable-status church wealth have been used to employ lawyers and insurance companies, to fight civil claims and to overpower victims and survivors, exploiting any legal loopholes they can to put us off pursuing cases or speaking out. Every effort has gone into protecting the reputation and resources of the Church, and providing care and support for our abusers, while neglecting us, the victims and survivors.

So many lives have been ruined and some tragically ended, not just because of horrendous sexual, physical, psychological and spiritual abuse, but by appalling cover-ups and a lack of action to protect us and others in the Church’s care. While we recognise some changes and improving attitudes in a few areas of the Church, they do not go far enough. We very much hope that IICSA will be as hard-hitting in its final report, when making more specific recommendations.

We believe there is clear evidence that there must be mandatory safeguarding reporting laws and an independent body responsible for the oversight of safeguarding. Without this, there is little hope of meaningful change, when the Church has repeatedly failed to regulate itself, with catastrophic consequences. There must be an end to the damage still being caused by a dysfunctional Church, with poor leadership and legal barriers that keep victims and survivors at arm’s length. The immense harm the Church continues to inflict shows a complete lack of Christian values, which the Church claims to live by. Many of us were children when we were abused, and our abusers have died. But we have the rest of our lives to live, carrying the damage done to us. We are not here to be assigned to an inconvenient past that can be swept under the carpet. We are part of the future. Nothing will cause us more despair than to hear more of the same, with a future inquiry a few years from now. This is not a time to read and reflect. This is an unconditional demand for change.

Eamonn Flanagan; Graham Wilmer; Daniel Mackle; Caroline Meakin; Deirdre McCormack; Stephen Bernard; Chris Speight; Gerard McLaughlin; Mark Murray; Jim Kirby; Jeremy Harvey

The following signatories have preferred to use the cyphers allocated to them by the inquiry: **RC-A117; RC-A711; RC-A2; RC-A343; RC-A23; RC-A20; RC-A37; RC-F1; RC-F6; RC-A8; RC-A5; RC-A77**

Martyrs’ memorial

● Do Anglicans now honour Catholic martyrs, asks John Mulholland (Letters, 7 November)? Among the proto-martyrs of the Reformation period were the three Carthusian priors martyred at Tyburn on 4 May 1535, among them St John Houghton, prior of the London Charterhouse. In 1611 the site of the London Charterhouse became a school and almshouse; the latter being

still in existence, the school having moved to Godalming in Surrey in 1872.

A former pupil of the school, Geoffrey Curtis (1902-1981), who became a member of the Anglican Community of the Resurrection, studied the history of the Carthusians at the Reformation and caused a memorial to 17 of the order who were martyred to be erected at the site of the Priory Church. It was dedicated by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr

Geoffrey Fisher, chairman of the governors, in 1958. An annual commemoration of the Martyrs was begun in 2005.

It is good to be able to answer John Mulholland in the affirmative!

(DR) JAMES P. S. THOMSON
(MASTER OF CHARTERHOUSE,
2001-2012)
HOLT, NORFOLK

● John Mulholland regrets the lack of a memorial to both Catholic and Protestant

LETTERS

“martyrs” in our cathedrals. Having lived with such a monument in Oxford’s University Church for some years now, I cannot agree.

As well as obvious candidates like Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley and a number of canonised Catholics, this large and expensive memorial lists Catholics who took up arms in the local version of the Prayer Book Rebellion in 1549, who were executed by Cranmer’s regime, Archbishop Laud, executed by Protestant zealots, and Stephen College, a co-conspirator with Titus Oates, executed by the spiritual heirs of Laud.

It is surely a good principle that people should not be commemorated together who would not wish to be. Putting Thomas Cranmer alongside Edmund Campion may make us feel virtuous, but it is a historical falsehood. As Mgr Ronald Knox pointed out: “Each of them died in the belief that he was bearing witness to the truth; and if you accept both testimonies indiscriminately, then you are making nonsense of them both.”

JOSEPH SHAW
(CHAIRMAN, THE LATIN MASS SOCIETY)
WOODSTOCK, OXFORDSHIRE

Lockdown morality

● Dr Aodhan Breathnach writes (Letters, 7 November)

that the Covid lockdown is derived from the government’s belief that reducing the number of deaths justifies any other damage that might result. It is more complex than this. It is also based on the extremely important principle that every member of the population has the right to medical treatment, especially in critical and acute cases, and also when dying.

This principle must weigh heavily on any political consideration. I am not defending the government, whose response to the epidemic has been shambolic, but I agree that we cannot allow the NHS to be overwhelmed so that it becomes unable to treat people.

CHRIS MAUNDER
KNARESBOROUGH,
NORTH YORKSHIRE

● Cardinal Nichols has assured us that there is no evidence that Covid-19 is spread from churches or church services. News from the BBC and others assures us that the virus cannot infect us in pubs or restaurants. We are told that we cannot catch it in gyms or swimming pools. There is, of course, no evidence that shops that have had to close spread the virus. Tennis and golf are perfectly safe. Children’s outdoor sports are safe as houses. So it’s just fairy dust that’s killing us, is it?

DENIS ARCHDEACON
WINCHESTER

Helicopter priest?

● I’m afraid I recognised myself a little in Susan Oates’ letter of 31 October.

Since the first lockdown, the Society of St Vincent de Paul and other good parishioners have been providing pastoral care. Rightly or wrongly, I have “heard” confessions over the phone and “anointed” one man over the phone. The wife made the sign of the Cross on her husband as I read the prayers.

I don’t play golf, but Susan Oates is right, I have been planning a foreign holiday for next year, please God. May God bless and protect us all is my pious prayer, but a helicopter would be useful for my four churches.

(FR) BARNABAS PAGE
DIOCESE OF CLIFTON

Nuclear peace

● John Keown makes a strong case for the condemnation of nuclear deterrence (“Why MAD is a moral evil”, 31 October) but he does not convince me.

He dismisses the peace that deterrence has brought as “specious and illusory”. As someone born in the 1950s, I am very grateful that there has been no direct conflict between the major powers. I attribute this, in part, to nuclear deterrence. Keown urges us to live as if the wolf already lives with the lamb and the leopard

lies down with the kid. Would he really be comfortable to live in a world where Russia, China and other states had nuclear weapons and the West did not?

(DR) JOHN STOER
GLASGOW

● It was good and timely of *The Tablet* to have published the article from Professor John Keown following Pope Francis’ teaching on the immorality of the possession of nuclear weapons. It is some three decades since the Scottish bishops unanimously adopted and taught that moral position, and on the bases of the three principles Professor Keown elucidated. I know; I was there.

MARIO CONTI
ARCHBISHOP EMERITUS
OF GLASGOW

The church habit

● Pope Francis thinks people who go to church “out of habit” should stay at home (“View from Rome”, 7 November). These are the words of a theoretician, not of a pastor familiar with the “smell of the sheep”. The Christian life is a process of growth, subject to fluctuation. Churchgoing as habit may be a long way short of perfection, but it’s a start – and a back-up when we’re in the spiritual doldrums.

HUGH ALLEN
TIVERTON, DEVON

THE LIVING SPIRIT

AND LITURGICAL CALENDAR

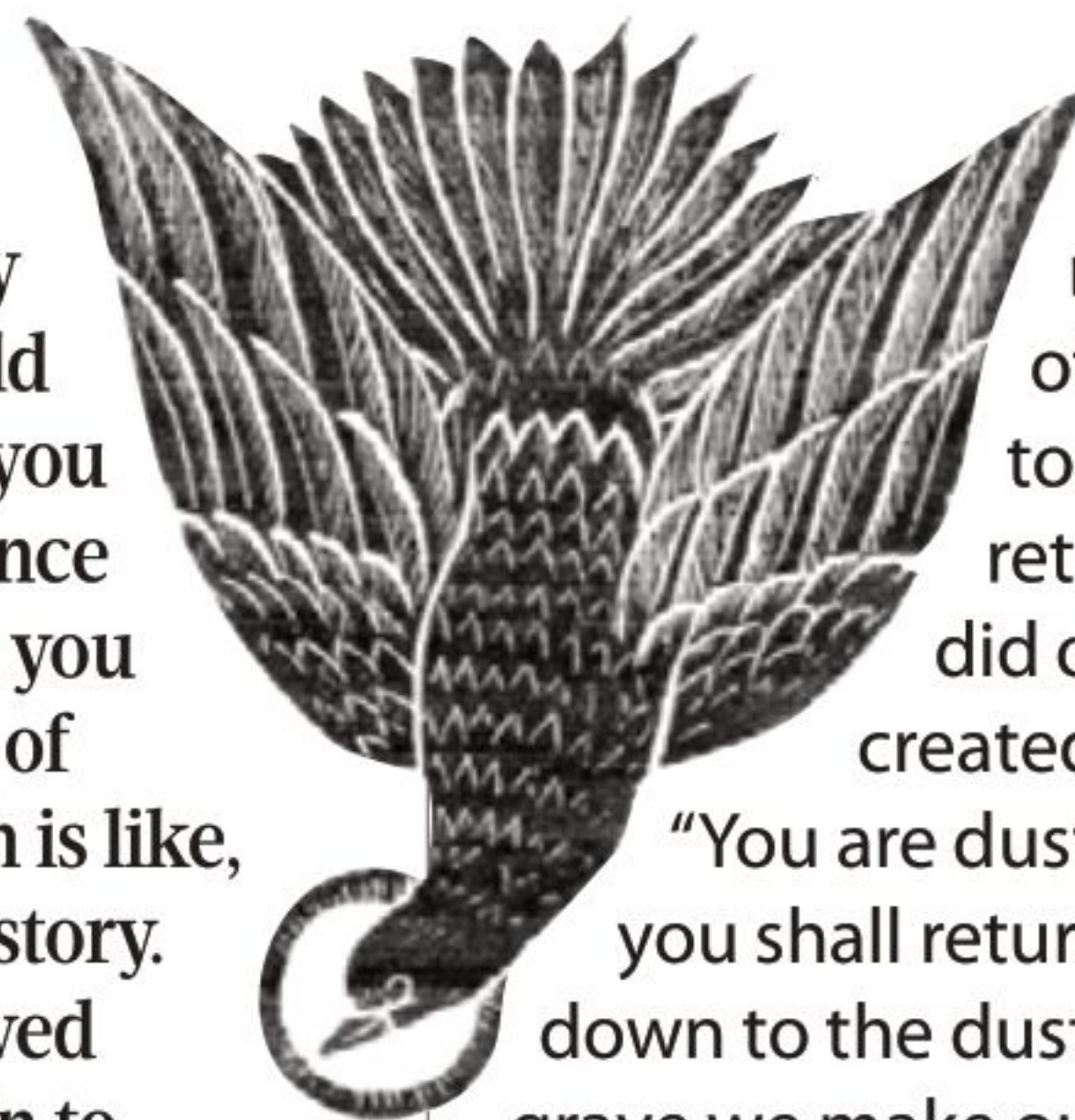
God is everywhere, in everything. When you see something beautiful – a sunset, a mountain, a stream – these are reminders of God’s presence, revealing his beauty. But when we talk about the real presence, his sacramental presence, that is a very, very important concept.

The real presence is the consecrated bread and wine. When I go into a church I always genuflect. Why? Because I believe that in a marvellous way, far beyond our understanding, Christ is truly present in the Tabernacle. If you ask me how this is, then that is theology. But you genuflect because Christ has said it is so. If you try to work out how and why it is, you will never get there. You receive that truth from him. As in

friendship, love between two people, you don’t work out why you love them – it would kill the spark between you if you analysed it. But once you love a person, then you grow in the knowledge of them. That is what faith is like, the beginning of a love story. The more you get involved then the more you begin to trust.

CARDINAL BASIL HUME OSB
FROM *THE MYSTERY OF LOVE*
(DARTON, LONGMAN & TODD, 2000)

Give rest, O Christ, to your servants, with your saints where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting. You only are immortal, our Creator



and Maker; and we are mortal, formed of the earth, and to earth we shall return. For so you did ordain when you created me, saying, “You are dust, and to dust you shall return.” All of us go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Give rest, O Christ, to your servants, with your saints where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.

MAGGIE ROSS
FROM *THE FIRE OF YOUR LIFE:*
A SOLITUDE SHARED (DARTON, LONGMAN & TODD, 1992)

◆ CALENDAR ◆

Sunday 15 November:
Thirty-Third Sunday of the Year (Year A)

Monday 16 November:
St Edmund of Abingdon, Bishop

Tuesday 17 November:
Feria or St Hilda, Abbess or St Hugh of Lincoln, Bishop or St Elizabeth of Hungary, Religious

Wednesday 18 November:
Feria or The Dedication of the Basilicas of Sts Peter and Paul, Apostles

Thursday 19 November:
Feria

Friday 20 November:
Feria

Saturday 21 November:
The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Sunday 22 November:
Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe



For the Extraordinary Form calendar go to www.lms.org.uk

A stranger to the truth

Aunt Betty, who called Claridge's 'The Pub',
was a fraud through and through

ANDREW ROSENHEIM

**Kiss Myself Goodbye:
The Many Lives of Aunt Munca**
FERDINAND MOUNT
(BLOOMSBURY CONTINUUM, 272 PP, £20)

TABLET BOOKSHOP PRICE £18 • TEL 020 7799 4064

FERDINAND MOUNT is a pukka paragon of the British literary world. A former editor of *The Times Literary Supplement* (after a considerable career as a Tory political adviser), he is an accomplished novelist and essayist, an old Etonian and graduate of Christ Church, Oxford – and both a Pakenham on his mother's side and a (third) baronet to boot.

Depending on your politics (and level of chippiness), this makes Mount an object of either esteem or envy; either way, it means his new and quite wonderful book comes as a surprise, for it is a portrait and pursuit of his Aunt Betty, who turns out to have been a complete if marvellous fraud.

Aunt Betty played a large role in Mount's early years, partly because of her proximity, perhaps partly because she was his god-mother, and also – he only modestly concedes – because he was the apple of her eye. She insisted on being called Munca after the mouse in Beatrix Potter (which even to a child seemed childish), called her husband Unca, and lived on and off in the part of Surrey chiefly defined by golf courses – the famed "Burma Road" course of Wentworth was for several years a neighbour.

The society she and her husband kept was racy and well-heeled, and the youthful Mount became accustomed to the company of entertainers and celebrities – Diana Dors and Sophie Tucker among them – and enjoyed time spent at "The Pub", Munca's name for Claridge's, where the couple kept a suite. It was a life of luxury and loucheness: tellingly, one of Munca's houses became the home some 50 years later of Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson.

Only gradually did Mount discover that this dashing facade hid some seismic cracks. Betty's age was not so much indeterminate as the subject of fantasy; her various surnames displayed an equal creativity. Her long and happy marriage to Mount's uncle was



Ferdinand Mount's Aunt Munca enjoyed a life of 'luxury and loucheness'. Inset, the author

in contrast to several earlier, ropier alliances, of which at least two were bigamous. And, most disturbingly for Mount, her younger "brother" Buster turned out to be her son, and was himself married seven times.

Yet what is most remarkable is how easy Betty found it to slice her way through the cake-like layers of a society that was famously conservative and hierarchical. She was ingenious at reinventing herself, and in this capacity was almost on a par with John le Carré's conman father, which makes it fitting that the spy novelist later taught Mount at Eton.

This book is full of an appealing and persistent gentle humour – Mount writes of the roguish unacknowledged son of Munca: "I was beginning to understand that if I thought the worst of Buster in any situation, there was a reasonable chance that I might be close to the truth." He has a keen eye for historical social detail, and the prose throughout is attractively precise but also eloquent. Yet none of the book's transparent charm can disguise the occasional brutality at work beneath the surface

gaiety. For all her flair and generosity, Munca was merciless in steering her (adopted) daughter Georgie away from suitors (David Dimbleby, Christopher Bland and Max Hastings among them), thus effectively ensuring that Georgie never had an independent life. Of her later adopted daughter, Celeste, we learn chillingly that Munca claimed to have her only on loan: when the young girl began to attract the kind of attention formerly reserved for Georgie, she was promptly returned, like an unsatisfactory pet after Christmas.

Grimmer still are the facts of Betty's upbringing in Sheffield, usually hovering on destitution, unearthed in enormous detail by an indefatigable adult Mount. Such are the multiple "alliances" and complicated identities assumed by his aunt that one almost yearns for an index.

Occasionally, the size of the cast of characters is almost overwhelming: it's as if Mount was unwilling to leave out any of the fruits of his remarkable research. In fairness, though, he is untangling a genealogical web that is not of his own making, and his thoroughness means that we can view the full panoply of his aunt's repeated and sometimes fantastic reinventions. Though, given her modest origins, we can't help but wonder how Betty managed such an extraordinary social and financial ascent. Here, in the famous phrase of Watergate's Deep Throat,

Mount follows the money, which provides an answer that is both convincing and unsurprising: another man, of course.

Another question remains. Why did Mount decide to pursue the truth behind his aunt's life of successive fictions so relentlessly? The answer seems to bring us full circle back to the author's childhood. He was clearly

doted on by Munca, and he acknowledges that he was perhaps "the son she never properly had". In turn, he seems to have been captivated by her. Only later did suspicion enter the frame – prompted perhaps by what was initially just simple curiosity about the aunt he adored. One hopes that, having disinterred the facts of the story, Mount will be reconciled to having loved someone he never really knew.





RECENTLY PUBLISHED **F.X. Velarde** / DOMINIC WILKINSON and ANDREW CROMPTON / Twentieth Century Society, £30 / Portrait of a remarkable Catholic church architect – exuberant, highly original and, until now, largely forgotten

Murder, she writes

MICHAEL GLOVER

Memorial Drive: A Daughter's Memoir

NATASHA TRETHEWEY

(BLOOMSBURY CIRCUS, 224 PP, £16.99)

TABLET BOOKSHOP PRICE £15.29 • TEL 020 7799 4064

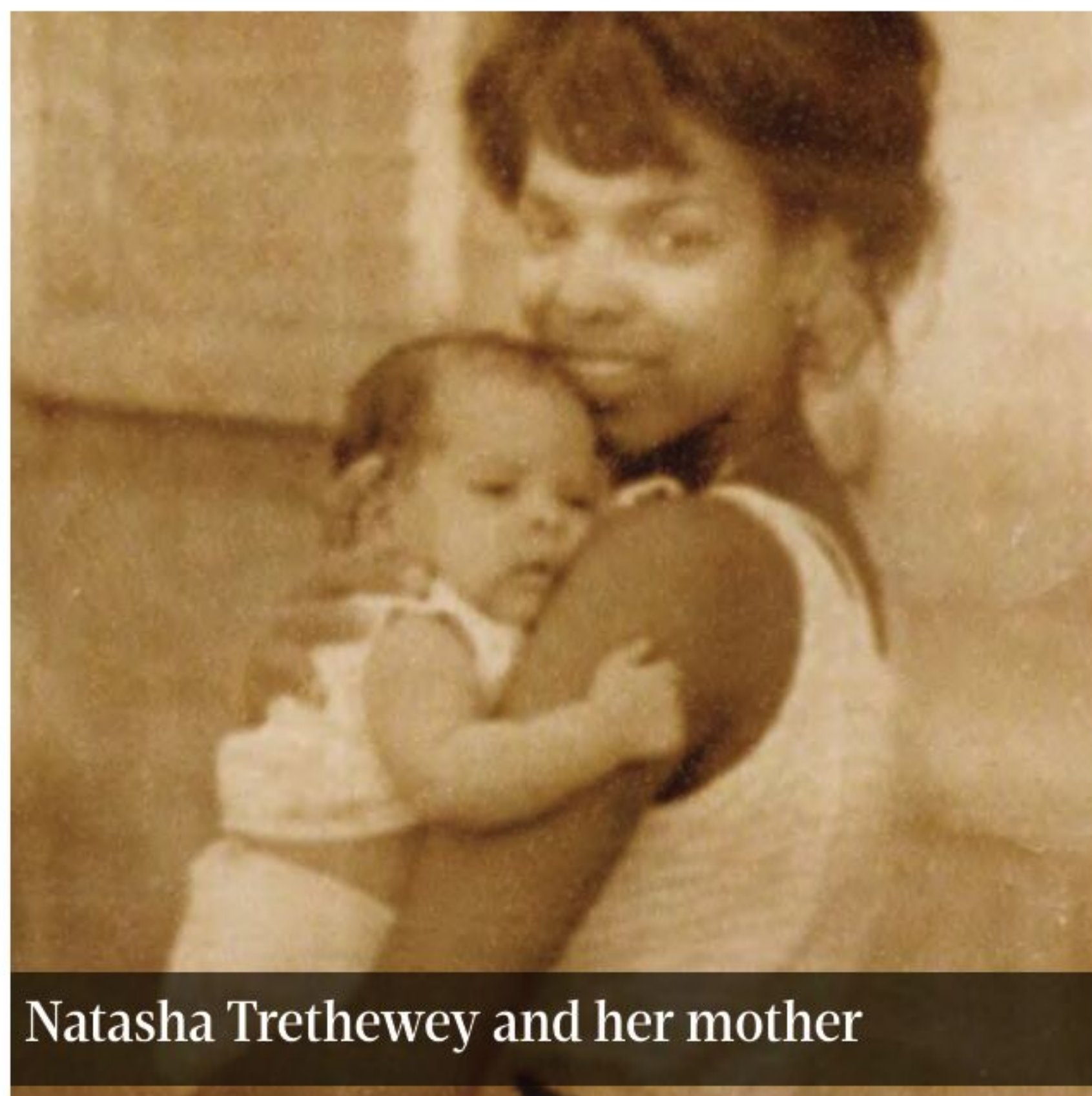
THE MOOD and the temper of this intensely private memoir by Natasha Trethewey, a former American poet laureate and Pulitzer Prize winner, feels a little like the consequences of shattering a precious mirror. You stare down at what has happened, almost disbelieving. You know that it can never be reassembled: it has broken into too many pieces. And yet, finally, there is no alternative to suffering the pain of trying, trying, and yet again trying, because that mirror holds up a likeness to you yourself.

Such is this piece of writing, which is the difficult bringing into being, step by dragging step, of an account of the murder of Natasha Trethewey's young and petite mother by her stepfather, a self-regarding brute of a man called Big Joe, an act so painful to contemplate, or even to recall, that it has taken more than 30 years for her to bring the bewildering, devastating horror of it all back into focus, to

make it sufficiently recoverable for her to be able to recount it to others, to make it livable with and credible, even to herself.

The memoir is brutally short, and the telling of its story stuttering and spasmodic, as you might expect. It flits back and forth, nervily, painting in the moments. Like a canvas by Klee, you feel as if its author has added a dab or two day by day, and then waited to see in what direction its further evolution might take her. In part, this is to do with fact that the power of recall walks hand-in-hand with the withdrawal from trauma into a space sufficiently calm and secure to let the memories happen.

A good part of it, as we find ourselves being



Natasha Trethewey and her mother

sucked, in its concluding pages, towards police transcripts of conversations between the victim and the killer just before he shot her, could not, we feel, have been told in any other way. The author had to draw back, stunned, rendered mute, in order to let herself listen in to the terrible, tense to-ings and fro-ings between victim and killer on the very eve of that brutally senseless act of slaughter, all the fear, desperation and fragility of her mother set against the wild taunts and insane, wrong-headed bouts of near pitiful self-pleading.

That marriage, her mother's second, had felt wrong from the start, according to Trethewey. But what could a mere daughter do about it? Nothing. Right from the start, Big Joe sought out every opportunity he could to humiliate her, driving her round and round Atlanta in his car as if he might be threatening to kidnap her, displaying the beginnings of a jealousy that would eventually consume him and destroy her world in its entirety. She knew that, from the moment her mother went out to work and left her alone with him, the taunts would begin, the efforts to undermine her confidence, to pit mother against daughter.

It is as if Trethewey is bearing witness to the tragedy of her future, and of her mother's future, long before that tragedy happens; as if she sees it approaching her from afar, like a car wildly out of kilter driving straight at her, glimpsed from beyond the point of visibility.

Flying high

CARINA MURPHY

Clouds of Love and War

RACHEL BILLINGTON

(UNIVERSE, 352 PP, £10)

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RACHEL BILLINGTON'S *Clouds of Love and War*, published to coincide with the eightieth anniversary of the Battle of Britain, is a detailed tale of the life of a Spitfire pilot in the Second World War, woven together with a poignant love story. Billington has written over 30 books, and her fans might recognise two of the main older characters here – Fred and Sylvia from *Glory: A Story of Gallipoli* (2015). This story belongs to their young, skyward-bound son Eddie, and Eva, the woman who steadfastly loves him, while also pursuing her own long-held desire to become a painter.

The pair meet at a tumultuous time, as the country is about to go to war. Eddie is an immature, privileged young man, adored by his mother, Sylvia, but with a more fractious

relationship with his father who lives with a "beastly stump" from the First World War. All Eddie wants to do is escape the world of family for "a perfect world" among the clouds.

Eva, two years younger than Eddie, is notable for her quiet self-possession. She lives with her elderly, academic father. Her Jewish mother is absent, presumed dead, having disappeared to Germany to try to rescue others. Despite coping with occasional flashes of anger and resentment that her mother has chosen to care for strangers over her own family, Eva possesses a determination, as she studies to become a painter, resisting her father's half-hearted overtures to cart her off to a distant cousin to provide childcare for a host of little ones.

Once she meets Eddie, she is equally determined to be with him, batting off advances from her besotted painting tutor and staying true to him until his mild interest grows into a love to match her own.

Eddie's emotional development is insightfully portrayed. During the course of the war, he blossoms from someone who finds it hard to access his emotions to someone who seeks and gains connection with Eva. He also grows up enough to realise that, despite his earlier irritation, his gruff father has done right by him after all: "Life is difficult and you

prepared me for it," Eddie concedes in the final pages.

The detailed descriptions of airfields, ranks and rituals are the fruit of a great deal of research, but it is lightly worn and the reader never feels bogged down in the nitty-gritty of war. This is a story that gathers pace, and the characters are so beautifully drawn that the reader must keep turning the pages, knowing that where there's war there's sorrow, but unable to look away until the bitter end.

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SPEED READING



NICK SPENCER

weighs up three books
on conservatism

Conservatism is not much given to theorising, but its hijacking by ultra-liberalism from one direction, and national populism from another, is precipitating some soul-searching. Edmund Fawcett's *Conservatism: The Fight for a Tradition* (Princeton University Press, £30; *Tablet* price £27) follows on from his acclaimed *Liberalism*, and covers roughly the same time frame (1830 to the present) and geography (UK, US, France, Germany). Written by a left-wing liberal, it seeks to understand how it is that conservatism has come to dominate a liberal modernity it originally hated and fought.

Small Men on the Wrong Side of History (Constable, £20; *Tablet* price £18) – the title comes from Barack Obama's description of al-Qaeda – is Ed West's take on the strange contortion, electorally triumphant but culturally vanquished, in which conservatives find themselves. Witty and self-deprecating, West surveys the landscape with candour and humour if without much hope, envisaging twenty-first-century conservatives as post-Reformation English Catholics, huddled together for safety in an overwhelmingly hostile climate.

Remaking One Nation: The Future of Conservatism (Polity, £20) is more sober but also more hopeful. Nick Timothy, celebrated and then denigrated as one of Theresa May's closest advisers, offers no false hope or easy answers (he starts with an account of May's disastrous 2017 election campaign). However, he also recognises that hegemonic liberalism is becoming ideological, overzealous and dysfunctional, in the process opening the door to a chastened, "post-liberal" conservatism.

Atonement through butchery

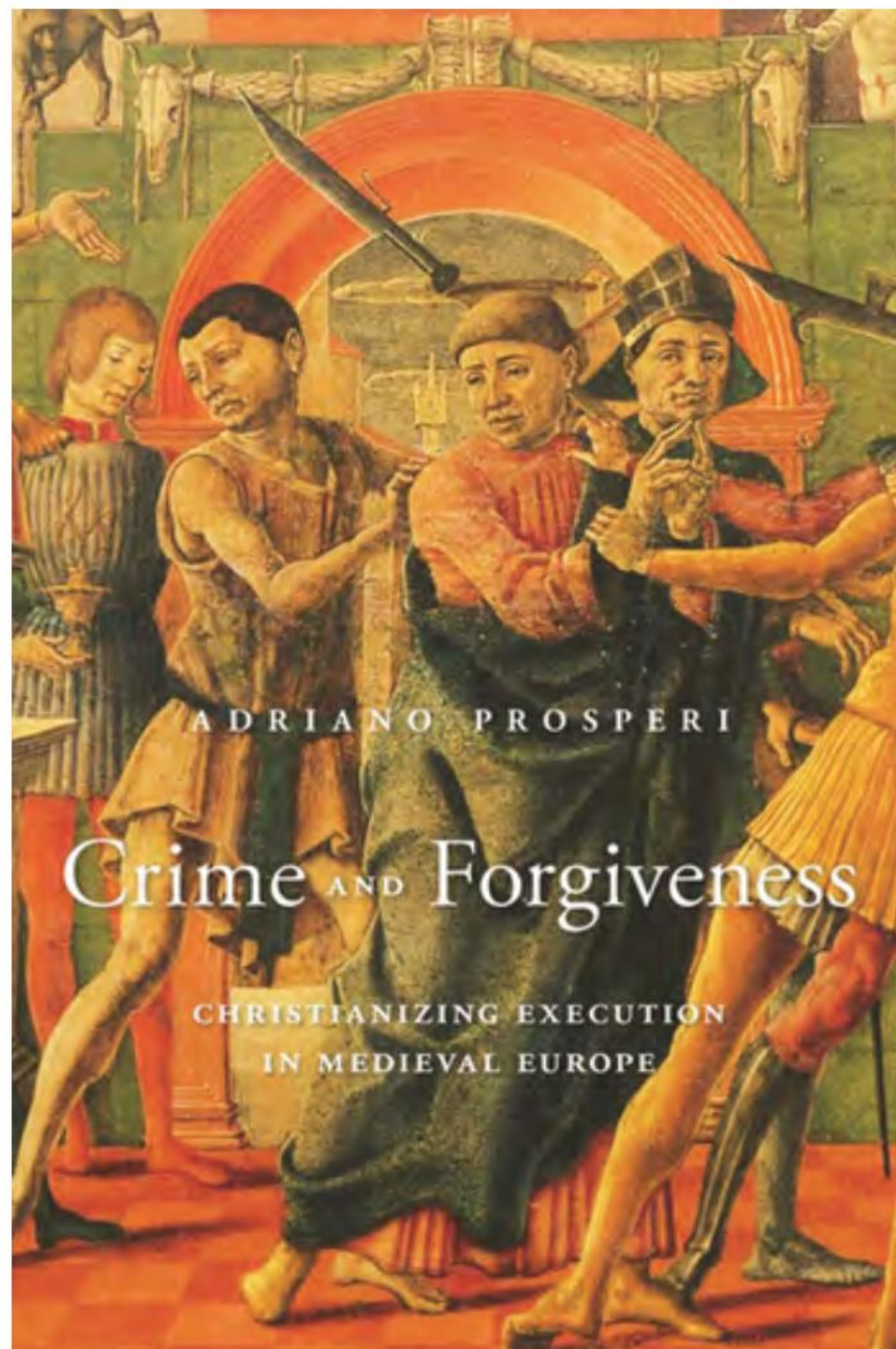
NICHOLAS VINCENT

Crime and Forgiveness: Christianizing Execution in Medieval Europe

ADRIANO PROSPERI

TRANSLATED BY JEREMY CARDEN
(HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 560 PP, £28.95)

TABLET BOOKSHOP PRICE £26.05 • TEL 020 7799 4064



LAST YEAR, according to Amnesty International, the death penalty was imposed in 657 cases reported worldwide. The true figure is a great deal higher, perhaps by several thousand. But the world's most zealous executioner, the People's Republic of China, keeps capital punishment a state secret. Not the least chilling reflection of Adriano Prosperi's thoroughly chilling study is that, throughout human history, secrecy in the imposition of state-sponsored death is a phenomenon reserved for the more paranoid and unstable of regimes. Generally, from ancient times through to the present day, execution of the condemned has been attended not by secrecy but by very public ritual.

Prosperi begins with an undeniable paradox. Christianity is a religion founded upon mercy and forgiveness, with Christ's sufferings on the Cross central to its message of salvation. Yet for nearly 2,000 years, the Christian Church has not only tolerated but actively supported the death penalties that secular authorities impose. It has done so, in the words of the Catholic catechism, even as late as 1997, believing that execution might be the "only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor".

In 2017 (albeit unnoticed here in a book first published in Italian in 2013), Pope Francis fundamentally shifted this stance, declaring

that "the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person, with the Church pledged to its abolition worldwide".

Meanwhile, from Golgotha to the state-sponsored assassination of Osama bin Laden, capital punishment has been considered not wicked but salvific. According to such reasoning, not only is the community of the many purged and disciplined by the sufferings of the guilty few, but penitent criminals may themselves be brought to salvation. Hence the continued presence of priests on death row. Hence the detailed reporting of speeches from the gallows. Hence the emergence, from the Middle Ages onwards, of an entire theatre of death, in southern Europe, choreographed by lay confraternities, pledged to supply spiritual counsel and, at least in the case of the properly repentant, Christian burial for the condemned.

It is from the archives of these "comforters", especially the increasingly noble and professionalised Italian "*misericordia*", that Prosperi draws his evidence. What emerges is the grimly fascinating story of public execution, viewed not as punishment for the body but as medicine for the soul. The "*misericordia*", first recorded in the fourteenth century, became a ubiquitous presence, their night-time chanting according to Machiavelli unnerving to the condemned; their hooded processions observed by Michel de Montaigne, who himself risked condemnation for reporting such things in the Rome of the 1580s, bringing solemn calm to what might elsewhere have been scenes of popular mayhem.

Closely attuned to counter-Reformation sensibilities, the comforters ensured that the condemned mount the scaffold with their eyes fixed only upon a painted image of Christ's suffering, the so-called "*tavolette*", emphasising the collective rather than the purely personal atonement achieved through butchery. It was these same comforters who then buried the human remains and ritually burned the executioner's ropes that, like the deceased's flayed skin, might otherwise be purloined for magical or other illicit purposes. The executioner himself was permitted to render and sell the deceased criminal's fat, widely considered a cure for epilepsy and a lucky charm for gamblers.

Change here, Prosperi suggests, came only in the eighteenth century, when the soul's existence was first publicly questioned and with it any salvation of the soul through dismemberment of the flesh. Even so, as late as the 1840s, the "*misericordia*" continued to ply their trade. Act III of Verdi's *Don Carlos*, indeed, offers a soundscape of public execution still familiar in the composer's own lifetime. Verdi's is one of the few testimonies left unexplored in Prosperi's fascinating albeit somewhat sprawling monograph. As a collection of stories assembled from archives little-known outside Italy, this is an invaluable exploration of the macabre. As a prompt to consider the relationship between mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, it raises questions of far wider significance.

RICHARD WAGNER: PARSIFAL, from Teatro Massimo, Palermo • CECIL BEATON'S BRIGHT YOUNG THINGS, National Portrait Gallery, London

THE CROWN, season four, streaming on Netflix from tomorrow • All links at WWW.TINYURL.COM/TABLETDIGITALARTS

PHOTO: © GIOVANNI DE SANDRE



‘Music will show us the joy of living’

Millions around the world watched Andrea Bocelli perform at Easter in an empty Duomo in Milan. But as the Italian tenor, who has been blind since boyhood, tells **Joanna Moorhead**, he never felt alone

Your new album, *Believe*, is released this week, and you’ve described it as a collection of “poignant and personal songs for the soul”. In this difficult moment, how important is music right now?

Music is a universal language that has the strength and ability to affect our consciousness and help make us better people. It encourages us to listen to that inner sky we all cherish inside our hearts. Music, like philosophy, originates from wonder and speaks to us through the “divine thresholds” that are our senses, thus reaching our souls.

Music makes us feel less alone and that we are not here by chance, as chance does not exist. Through music and prayer, our souls are liberated from the noisy presence of our egos and show us the beauty and fullness of life. This is more relevant than ever in these

difficult and uncertain times.

I firmly believe music has the power to console us and help us grow. It can even be a mystical experience, touching the lives of many among us. Of course, none of this is new: Aristotle argued that music could change the moral character of our souls and open our hearts and minds. Music is like a light: it shows us the way to the joy of living.

The themes of the new album are faith, hope and charity, and you say they’re the keys to giving meaning and completeness to all our lives, as well as the fundamental building blocks of Christianity. Why are these three elements so important for us, both as Christians and as human beings?

In this moment in time, hope is more crucial than ever to our existential balance. Without hope, we risk falling into despair.

Without faith, life is tragedy waiting to happen. Without charity, there can be neither faith nor hope. When we turn to that inner piece of heaven we keep within our souls and learn to live in harmony with the outer world, we realise how wonderful it is to be alive. Of course I am a singer, not a theologian. The musical message I’m sharing in my new album is a means to reach people in their souls – and however modest and incomplete it may be, its purpose is to offer the receiver an incentive to look for one’s own spiritual dimension and listen to its reasons.

At Easter you performed *Music for Hope* in the empty Duomo di Milano. Then, as now, the news inside and outside Italy was grim. What was that day like for you?

It was intense. The cathedral was empty – but the loneliness was illusory. Firstly because it’s the house of God and so I never felt alone: one can feel the comfort of His supernatural presence and beneficial energy in every corner. There were millions of us there, all interconnected, and I merely lent my voice to our universal prayer. Our Christian Easter, with its message of love and redemption, seemed the perfect time to take a moment and remind ourselves that life always triumphs. And Milan seemed all the more significant a place to be as at the time it was one of the cities most affected by the pandemic.

Some of the melodies on the new album connect to your childhood. What are your memories of growing up in Tuscany?

Wide and strong wings come with deep roots. I grew up in the Tuscan countryside, and I absorbed its culture and values. I still hold a strong bond with my land and have countless good memories of my time there. The melodies originating from my childhood included in the album are a tribute to Tuscany’s popular religious tradition. These melodies are part of my story and they bring back memories of my grandmother and the other elderly members of the Bocelli family.

In my mind I can picture many sacred processions back in my home town, in Tuscany: I remember the candlelights and that sense of domestic warmth. I remember the small church in my village, the music of its organ, which brought me closer to music. These magical sounds moved me deeply – they were an invitation to reflect, and they helped me turn my attention to the sky above.

The track “Fratello Sole Sorella Luna” on the new album references *Brother Sun*,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

THEATRE

Open and shut case

Digital platforms come to the rescue as theatres go dark again

MARK LAWSON

Death of England: Delroy

NATIONAL THEATRE, LONDON

Crave

CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE

THE NATIONAL Theatre reopened on Wednesday 4 November having been shut since 16 March due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It closed again the same day. The opening night of *Death of England: Delroy* fell just a few hours before the second national infection-suppressing lockdown imposed by Boris Johnson's government.

Let's hope the world eventually returns to a state in which future historians are able to find our times extraordinary. And in theatre history, this will be one of the most extraordinary events of all: the only National Theatre show ever to have closed immediately after press night. (Thankfully, the premiere was filmed and will become available on the National's website.)

Ideally, it will be shown in a double bill with a predecessor piece, *Death of England*, premiered in February 2020 just before the National shut.

Written by Roy Williams and Clint Dyer (who also directed), *Death of England* was a 90-minute monologue, in which white working-class Londoner Michael Fletcher (Rafe Spall) recounted his dad's sudden death in 2018. His identity disrupted by family revelations, Michael gave a furious eulogy at the cremation, excoriating unseen



PHOTO: NORMSKI

Michael Balogun is 'electrifying' as Delroy

mourners, including his best friend, Delroy, a black Briton.

In *Death of England: Delroy*, Williams and Dyer give Delroy an hour and a half to reply. Magnificently played by Michael Balogun, across an electrifying spectrum of charm, wit, rage and pathos, he describes working as a bailiff, and friendships with both Michael and Michael's sister, Carly. The key scenes take place in a police cell, a courtroom, and a hospital, but, as in the first monologue, the writers subvert easy expectations about which side the speaker might be on in relation to England, Brexit, or even the Black Lives Matter movement.

The biggest change is the staging. Although both shows are played with theatregoers seated around a cruciform platform, Spall

leaned across, and sometimes jumped into, the audience, even offering some a swig of his beer. Such actions would currently be illegal.

In an Olivier Theatre reconfigured to be Covid-safe, Perspex screens block the intersecting angles between Balogun and us. Every other row of seats is empty, and several seats left empty between each "bubble" of customers, who, before entering the auditorium, have sat at tables in the bar area, enclosed within wooden partitions, giving the National the feel of an airport courtesy lounge.

Meanwhile, Chichester Festival Theatre's comeback production – a revival of Sarah Kane's 1998 play *Crave* – was also knocked out by Lockdown 2 just as its run began. Luckily, the show was simultaneously streaming on pay-per-view (a vital new source of income and international audience during this crisis), so it's continued in that way. And like the NT piece, it will be released online.

With solo work the inevitable default of distanced theatre, it's joyous to watch a four-hander, possible because Kane's speakers are in isolation, though with family or sexual connections intuited from clues in the enigmatic and unnerving one-liners and monologues.

Tinuke Craig's production puts four enthralling actors (Erin Doherty, Alfred Enoch, Wendy Kweh and Jonathan Slinger) on parallel treadmills, standing, walking, and lying (in both senses). The escalating theme of human disconnection and mental distress remains almost unbearable in the knowledge of Kane having taken her own life, aged 28, a year after *Crave* was staged.

But a rare consolation in these strange days is the thought of what a closure of theatres would have been like when work could not be filmed, streamed or Zoomed and there would have been no shows at all for most of a year.

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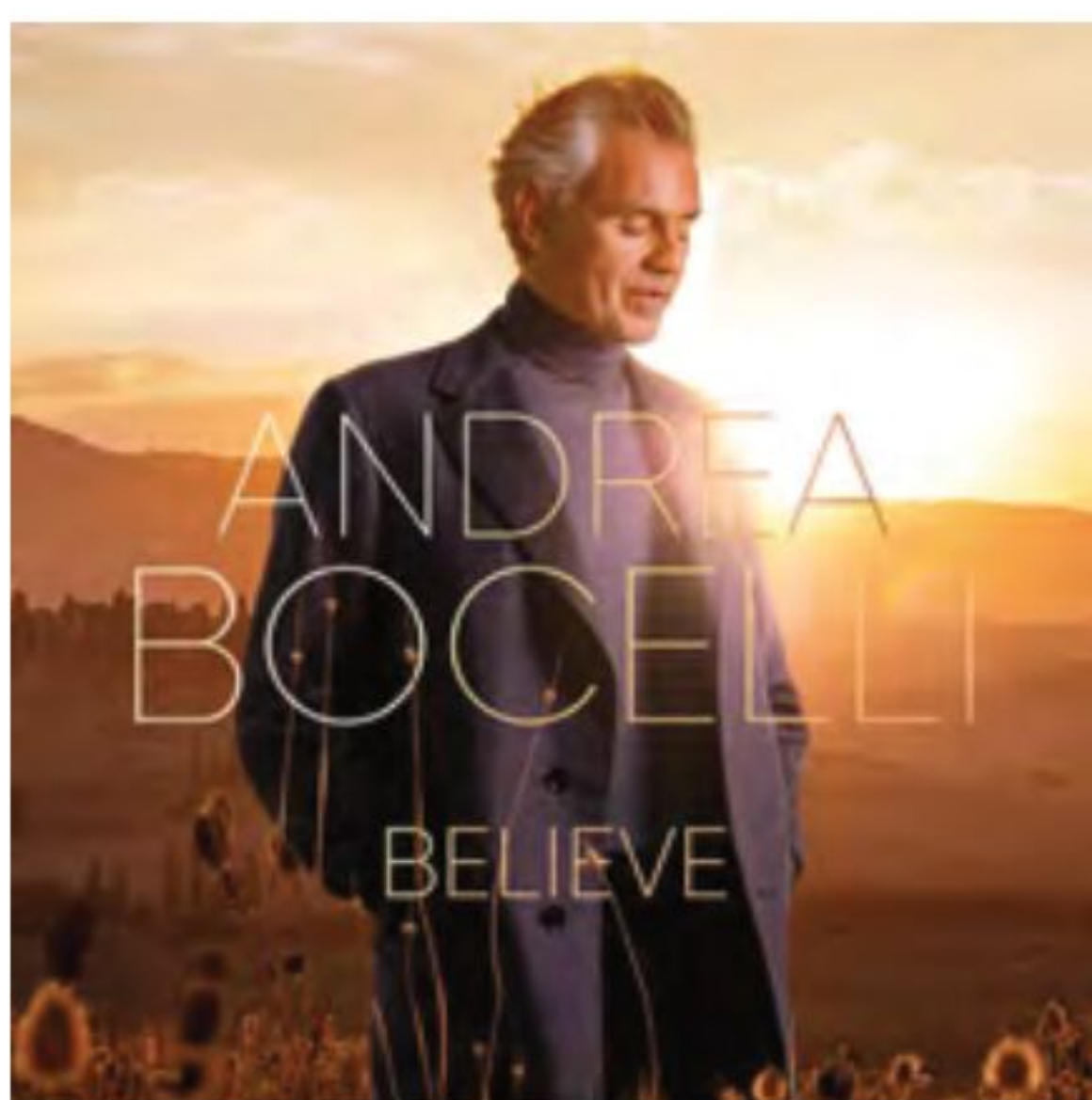
***Sister Moon*, a movie about the life of St Francis. Pope Francis – for whom you have performed – recently put a spotlight on his Assisi namesake, and you have visited the Italian city many times. How**

important is the legacy of St Francis in your own life?

I am particularly fond of this "prayer" as I was close to both Riz Ortolani, who composed the lyrics, and Franco Zeffirelli, who directed the movie.

Whenever I think of St Francis, I try to imagine his life. He devoted it entirely to

finding the meaning of life and I can picture a man walking towards me who possesses an innate ability to dialogue with nature, with animals and, most of all, with his fellow humans.



A passage from the Gospel comes to my mind, in which a person asked Jesus what good works he must do to inherit eternal life, and Christ replied: "There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into

life, keep the Commandments." Then he added: "Go sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in Heaven."

I believe the word of St Francis lives on in the hearts of those who take the time to listen to it. A few seconds seal the deal, and everything becomes crystal clear through an idea that

doesn't fear the passing of time – a true promise of upcoming peace. Francis' life, his example and his lessons still reach deep within our consciences and shake them till they are uncomfortable and unfriendly as

only the truth can be. Without dialogue there can be no growth; without dialogue there is no hope.

What is your greatest hope for your three children and the world they will inhabit when they grow up?

My hope is they will be able to fulfil their aspirations and put their talents to good use, regardless of any parental ambitions. My two "boys" are now men and have taken their own paths. Amos has a degree in aerospace engineering, while Matteo is specialising in vocal studies and is gradually migrating to a professional level. I hope their lives, as well as Virginia's, my little daughter, will always be inspired by Christian values. And I hope they have lives spent in a world free of any wars, and a world in which good is always triumphant.

Andrea Bocelli's Believe is out now on Sugar/Decca Records.

PHOTOS: BBC/BONE SOUP PRODUCTIONS, ELLIE KYNASTON

Michelin-starred chef Tom Kerridge



TELEVISION

Last orders

Even before Covid hit, pubs had their backs to the wall

LUCY LETHBRIDGE

Saving Britain's Pubs with Tom Kerridge
BBC2

WHEN THIS four-part series began filming, the British pub was endangered (14,000 have closed since 2000): but a year later the pandemic has shifted things a lot further. Michelin-starred chef Tom Kerridge, who has form in saving small businesses, was sent in last November to help three struggling publicans. Episode one (12 November) meant gritted teeth for the viewer, who could see last winter's optimistic outlays on refurbishment would soon come up against impending financial catastrophe.

In rural Cornwall, Amy and Ian (inset) of the White Hart work all hours and Tom suggested they might knock down a supporting wall to make the most of their lovely view over the Tamar Valley, to turn them into "a destination pub". Cautious Ian, who also works as a gas engineer, wasn't so sure but multitasking human dynamo Amy makes all the decisions and she went for it.

Boldness wins in programmes like this and Amy had it in spades. Not only is she in charge of the kitchen but she's turned one room into a village shop. She organises pub quizzes, potato competitions and hosts the village choir. "She's a driven woman," said a resigned Ian. "A Duracell bunny," agreed Tom admir-



ingly, as builders got to work demolishing the back wall.

Meanwhile in Nunhead, south London, the locals who frequent the Golden Anchor are from the Afro-Caribbean community who come for dominoes and Jamaican chickens' feet soup. But they often spend three hours nursing a single beer, and landlady Lana is barely turning a profit. The Prince Albert pub in Stroud, on the other hand, is filled to the rafters with locals who come for the craft beer, live music and the convivial landlords, Miles and Lottie. But are they too generous? After they've given free drinks to the musicians and allowed the pizza man to set up outside free of charge, there's hardly anything left. They turn over £350,000 from which they make an annual profit of £3,000.

Was the answer to make the local pub more of a local restaurant? Kerridge didn't seem to think so though he did note that it's difficult to survive being "wet-led" nowadays. Lottie and Miles need to charge more for a pint if they want to make any profit because the pub is "beer tied" to a pub company (or "pubco"), which means they pay less rent (though it still seems pretty high at £19,000 per annum and is constantly under threat of a raise) but make less on beer.

On 5 March this year Amy and Ian celebrated their new dining-room view by hosting a packed St Piran's night for the villagers. Cornish pasties were on the house, and the choir sang the Cornish anthem. But Tom Kerridge – whose charm, energy and creative business nous is plain to see – couldn't possibly have predicted the disaster that was awaiting the hospitality industry. What started as an uplifting tale of hard work and ingenuity will by episode three have become a different documentary altogether.

RADIO

Let's hear it for hygge

Seeking the Scandi essence

D.J. TAYLOR

The Invention of Scandinavia

BBC RADIO 4

LONG YEARS ago a friend and I compiled a "bigot's guide to Europe" for a student magazine. The highlight of this exercise in regional stereotyping was the caption for Scandinavia, which read "Suicide, pornography, Abba". If there were plenty of clichéd views of national identity on offer in the first tranche of this three-part series (10-24 November), then their exposure confirmed a long-held suspicion that stereotypes are often collusive and may involve the willing participation of the alleged victims.

Misha Glenny and his producer Miles Warde, who also features in the programme, began their enquiry on the Oresund Bridge that separates Denmark from neighbouring Sweden. As any BBC4-fancier will know, this is the backdrop for the immensely successful Scandi-Noir series *The Bridge*, whose signature mark is the sometimes less-than-willing collaboration between its Swedish and Danish law enforcers.

The structure itself had been hailed as a symbolic undertaking, guaranteed to bring the two countries together. Twenty years later, tempers seemed to be fraying at the edges. Denmark had closed its borders in the wake of Covid, while allowing its own citizens access to a neighbouring nation reluctant to enter lockdown.

Meanwhile, behind contemporary events lurked the memory of centuries of Danish land-loss and military humiliation: the defeat by Sweden in 1658; the seizure (by Britain) of the Danish fleet during the Napoleonic wars; the Schleswig-Holstein debacle of 1864. Novelist Carsten Jensen, an engaging figure opposed to the national ideal of *hygge* (defined as conformist commonality), noted that, denied much of a political role, Denmark had reinvented itself as a "moral superpower".

Carsten also maintained that his fellow citizens "believe that no one in the world but them knows how to have a good time". If *The Invention of Scandinavia* was anxious to establish some of the differences between the Danes and their neighbours, then it also shed a light on Danish dislike of other Danes, usually focused on remote and "stinky" Jutland.

All this was highly entertaining, if sometimes verging on breeziness ("It's not all Abba and social democracy") while Glenny and Warde occasionally threatened to turn into a comedy double act. What gives the series its edge are the fragments of *recherche* detail. Who knew, for example, that Imperial (and slave-owning) Denmark's Indian possessions lasted until 1845, while its Caribbean islands had been sold to the US as recently as 1917?

NEWS BRIEFING

THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD



YOUTUBE

Gunmen free cardinal

Cardinal Christian Tumi (pictured), Archbishop Emeritus of **Douala**, was freed a day after being kidnapped by gunmen on Thursday last week in Cameroon's North-West Region. "Glory be to God for Cardinal Tumi has been freed by the separatist fighters," announced Bishop George Nkuo of Kumbo diocese. "He is fine and in good health." The 90-year-old cardinal was ambushed as he travelled by road between Bamenda and Kumbo. He has been vocal in calling for dialogue and peace in the four-year-long conflict in the English-speaking North-West and South-West regions of the country.

Judges in Pakistan on Monday accepted medical evidence that Arzoo Raja, the Catholic teenager from **Karachi** at the centre of a forced conversion and marriage case, is no older than 14. They declared that such a child marriage would be against the law of the province of Sindh, which prohibits marriage under the age of 18. However, they have yet to rule on whether Arzoo Raja freely converted to Islam. She has been ordered to remain in a shelter home until the next court hearing on 23 November. Her abductor is still in custody.

The Catholic Church's Caritas agencies are supporting victims of Hurricane Eta, an unusually powerful storm which hit **Central America** on 3 November, leaving scores dead and hundreds missing.

The Bishops' Conference of Honduras launched an appeal for solidarity after the streets in many places were transformed into rivers. On Nicaragua's

Mosquito Coast, strong winds ripped roofs off buildings. Fr Francisco Chavarría, Caritas director in Nicaragua, reported working with parishes along the Coco River where "families have been left with nothing".

In Guatemala, where at least 150 have been killed, local infrastructure collapsed with many buried under mudslides. Caritas has distributed food, hygiene supplies and portable shelters to survivors.

Covid-19 has hit the densely populated Zaatari refugee camp, the largest in **Jordan**, which hosts 76,000 refugees who have fled the conflict in Syria. Médecins Sans Frontières said last week that it has opened a centre for the treatment of mild or moderate cases, with 30 beds available.

Worshippers wearing protective masks attended a Mass on All Saints' Day at the Chaldean Cathedral of St Joseph in **Baghdad** to mark the tenth anniversary of the massacre of 58 people in a church by al-Qaeda. Meanwhile at an evening Mass at Our Lady of Deliverance Church in Baghdad, Syriac Catholic Patriarch Ignace Joseph III Younan said: "Our martyrs are the torches of faith that illuminate our paths of life and ignite in us the fire of love toward everyone."



A **Polish** archdiocese has apologised and promised compensation to victims, after its former leader, Cardinal Henryk Gulbinowicz (pictured), was banned from public appearances and denied the right to a cathedral funeral after being implicated in sexual abuse. "That this matter has

been taken up, clarified and pursued to the end shows there is no concession in the Church for such a crime," the Wroclaw archdiocese said in a statement. "We may be talking about deeds which took place decades ago, but they will never be considered to have expired."

A Vatican nunciature decree also barred 97-year-old Gulbinowicz, the oldest of Poland's six cardinals, from using episcopal insignia, and ordered him to pay an "appropriate sum" to the St Joseph Foundation, set up a year ago by the Polish Bishops' Conference to help abuse victims and co-ordinate prevention and protection.

Dam disaster remembered

Brazilian Bishop Vicente de Paula Ferreira, Auxiliary in Belo Horizonte, marked the fifth anniversary of a dam collapse, which killed 19 people and contaminated 415 miles of rivers, by offering ongoing "solidarity with all those affected". The dam at the Samarco mine in Mariana, Minas Gerais, was owned by Vale, a Brazilian company, and by BHP, an Anglo-Australian mining giant listed on the London Stock Exchange.

The right to water must be enshrined in law as part of the new constitution recently voted for by **Chileans**, according to the Apostolic Vicar of Aysén. Mgr Luis Infanti de la Mora pointed out this week that large agricultural and other companies have preferential access to water so that people's daily needs are not always met.

A group of Catholic nuns has accused **Poland's** mass-circulation daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* of defamation and appealed for human rights arbitration, after the paper alleged that the country's religious sisters were mainly relegated to "cooking, cleaning and collecting post" for priests, and for bishops living "in palaces".

"We treat these words as discrimination against women and an insult to nuns, who live according to the charism of their order in line with their

convictions," said the nuns from the St Elizabeth order, which runs schools, orphanages and special needs facilities in Poland, with branches in Africa, Latin America, Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.



A half-British teenager, Joan Roig Diggles (pictured) has been beatified as a martyr in **Spain**, more than eight decades after he was murdered in 1936 aged 19 by republican forces during the Civil War for his work as a member of the Federation of Young Christians.

Preaching at the beatification Mass in Barcelona's Sagrada Familia basilica last Saturday, Cardinal Juan Omella of Barcelona, president of the Spanish bishops' conference, said: "He was committed, body and soul, to building a civilisation of love, and to fighting for justice, peace and solidarity. This young martyr recognised the wish to transform society, not through violence, but through the Gospel embodied in the Church's social doctrine."

Kidnappings protest

Thousands of Haitians marched in protest this week in **Port-au-Prince**, after the body of teenager Evelyne Sincère was found on Sunday last week. She was one of 162 kidnappings this year but her family was not able to pay the ransom demanded for her return. A video of her sister crying over her body sparked outrage in the country.

Following another high-profile murder earlier this year the Haitian bishops' conference said: "Enough is enough!"

Compiled by **James Roberts** and **Ellen Teague**.

“It will only be a matter of time before our MPs come under pressure to broaden the law even more ... this puts us on a very dangerous path.”

Dr John Kleinsman, ethics expert for the New Zealand Catholic bishops, on the rush to euthanasia legislation in the region



ROME / Vatican makes public results of an internal sexual abuse inquiry for first time

Report tracks McCarrick's rise despite misconduct allegations

CHRISTOPHER LAMB

THE VATICAN has taken a decisive step in the Church's fight against clerical sexual abuse by issuing a long-awaited report into how Theodore McCarrick was promoted to Archbishop of Washington DC despite facing allegations of sexual misconduct.

Running to more than 400 pages, the report took more than two years to complete. It was compiled following an extensive trawl through the archives of the Roman Curia for relevant documentation on McCarrick, and interviews with some 90 witnesses that ranged in length from one to 30 hours. It is the first internal inquiry carried out by the Vatican into the handling of an abuse case that has been released to the public.

Titled “Report on the Holy See's Institutional Knowledge and Decision-Making Related to Former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick”, the document unpacks in exhaustive detail what was known about McCarrick, and



Theodore McCarrick in 2001

when, by high-ranking churchmen.

Now aged 90, Pope Francis removed McCarrick from the College of Cardinals in 2018 when a credible allegation that he had abused a minor was lodged with the Archdiocese of New York.

The Pope then ruled that he should be removed from the priesthood after a Church court found him guilty of abusing both minors and adults.

But the report showed that authorities in the Holy See were

made aware of sexual misconduct allegations against McCarrick before Pope John Paul II appointed him Archbishop of Washington in 2000, and a cardinal a year later. When he was informed of the allegations, the Polish Pope carried out a secret inquiry that the Vatican report says received incomplete information. McCarrick also strongly denied the allegations, and was believed.

“No procedure, even the most detailed, is free from error because it involves the consciences and decisions of men and women,” Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Holy See's Secretary of State, admitted after the report's publication.

“But the report will also have an effect in this respect: in making all those involved in such choices more aware of the weight of their decisions or omissions. These are pages that encourage us to reflect deeply and ask ourselves what more we can do in the future, learning from the painful experiences of the past.”

The Vatican's inquiry also finds

that, in the early 1990s, anonymous letters accusing McCarrick of paedophilia had been sent to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, various cardinals in the US and the papal ambassador to Washington. However, the latter allegations were not lodged with Rome. The first allegation that McCarrick abused a minor did not come to the Holy See's attention until after June 2017.

Cardinal Parolin argues that steps have been taken to prevent a repeat of the McCarrick debacle. Over the summer a new handbook for bishops and religious superiors ordered them to investigate anonymous allegations from third parties, while the 2019 law, *Vos estis lux mundi*, updates Church legislation to widen the definition of abuse to include abuses of authority.

Francis commissioned the McCarrick inquiry in September 2018, saying: “We will follow the path of truth wherever it may lead.” It came weeks after a retired former papal ambassador to the US, Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, called on the Pope to resign for allegedly mishandling the McCarrick case. The report, however, finds that in 2012 Viganò himself had been ordered to investigate an allegation of misconduct against McCarrick but did nothing.

(See Features, pages 6-7.)

UNITED STATES

US Catholic bishops hail Biden as president-elect

ARCHBISHOP José Gómez, president of the United States bishops' conference, issued a statement on Saturday congratulating Joe Biden and Kamala Harris on their proclaimed win in the 3 November presidential election, *writes Michael Sean Winters*.

“We congratulate Mr Biden and acknowledge that he joins the late President John F. Kennedy as the second United States president to profess the Catholic faith,” Gómez said. “We also congratulate Sen.

Kamala D. Harris of California, who becomes the first woman ever elected as vice president.”

Archbishop Gómez echoed Biden's call for national unity, saying: “I believe that at this moment in American history, Catholics have a special duty to be peace-makers, to promote fraternity and mutual trust, and to pray for a renewed spirit of true patriotism in our country.”

Biden quoted from the Book of Ecclesiastes in his speech claiming

victory. “The Bible tells us that to everything there is a season – a time to build, a time to reap, a time to sow. And a time to heal,” he said. “This is the time to heal in America.” He concluded his speech by reciting the lyrics of the popular hymn, “I will raise you up, on Eagle's wings.”

Biden – who hardly campaigned, while Donald Trump held dozens of rallies in the final days of the campaign, with more than 50,000 reportedly gathering in Butler, Pennsylvania – won more reported votes than any presidential candidate in history, more than 75 million. Trump increased his vote total from four years ago, reportedly winning 71 million votes.

The final tallies were delayed

as a record number of Americans voted by mail due to the pandemic. However, legal challenges from incumbent President Trump are outstanding in several states, including Pennsylvania, and there is a possibility that they might reach the Supreme Court.

On Tuesday, Attorney General Bill Barr authorised federal prosecutors to pursue allegations of voting irregularities before the election is certified.

Polls show Biden did marginally better among white, working-class Catholics in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, but Trump improved his showing among Latino Catholics in both south Florida and the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, the most heavily Catholic region in the country.

EUROPE/ASIA

Climate of conflict between religions to be resisted, say cardinals

CARDINAL Jean-Claude Hollerich, head of the Comece association of Catholic bishops' conferences in the European Union, said that recent Islamist terror attacks must not divide religious communities in Europe, *write Tom Heneghan and Ellen Teague.*

"If the objective of the terrorists is to divide us, we all together – the countries of the European Union but also Christians, atheists, agnostics, Muslims, Jews – must say no," he told the Italian news agency SIR. "Fanaticism makes no sense." Terrorists "cannot bear that this [European] project, based on common values, is possible," he added.

Asked about the Prophet Muhammad caricatures whose publication radical Islamists say they want to avenge, the cardinal said: "Freedom cannot be absolute. I think that freedom of expression must also take into account what others think, their feelings, especially religious feelings."

He cited Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* to say freedom required fraternity to be able to work equally.

Meanwhile, Cardinal Charles Bo of Yangon, co-president of Religions for Peace and president of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, called for "building bridges" after acts of violence in the name of religion. "It is our obligation as faith leaders to model responses that are dignified, humane and merciful rather than vengeful. We, as representatives of the world's diverse religious traditions, recommit ourselves to multi-religious respectful discourse."

Lebanon's Maronite Patriarch, Cardinal Bechara Boutros Rai, also called for Islamist atrocities to be addressed by further collaboration between Christians and Muslims, during a homily at the concluding Mass of the annual synod of the Maronite Church on 31 October.

FRANCE / 'Violation of religious freedom' plea fails

Court rebuffs bishops over challenge to lockdown ban

TOM HENEGHAN

FRANCE'S highest administrative court has rebuffed the local episcopal conference in the latter's bid to challenge a ban on public Masses in the country's second lockdown because of rising cases of coronavirus.

The Conseil d'État, basing its decision on video broadcasts of church services in recent months, said the Catholic Church had not observed the strict health standards the government had set down. This was especially problematic because the advanced age of many Massgoers made them more vulnerable, it said.

"We're disappointed, of course," said Éric de Moulins-Beaufort, Archbishop of Reims (inset), but he accepted the decision. France's second lockdown lets churches stay open for private prayer but bans public services and limits funerals to 30 participants.

The bishops' conference filed its

emergency appeal against the ban after pressure from conservative Catholic groups, complaining it was a violation of their religious freedom. The court said that the ban would last until the planned end of the current "health emergency" on 16 November. If the emergency is extended, the government should consult again religious leaders.

The bishops' conference was not unanimous about the appeal. Bishops supporting it said off the record that the Church needed to stand up to a government that



they felt was trying to limit its room to act in public.

■ Eight French priests are currently under judicial investigation for sexual abuse, and another five are either behind bars or wearing electronic tags, according to a report to the French bishops' autumn meeting which, based on information from dioceses for the period from October 2018 to August 2020, said 189 priests and two lay church employees had been accused of abuse.

The bishops have appointed an independent commission to conduct the most extensive study yet into the scandal. It is due to issue its report in autumn 2021.

The commission, which has been touring the country, interviewing victims and scouring archives, said in June that it had so far found that more than 3,000 people have been sexually abused by about 1,500 priests and employees of the Church since 1950.

AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND

Widespread increase in euthanasia legislation

EUTHANASIA is cutting a "dangerous path" through Australia and New Zealand after a Labor Party election win in the Australian state of Queensland, and a "yes" vote for euthanasia in New Zealand, according to one leading Catholic ethics expert in the region, *writes Mark Bowling.*

Queensland's Labor premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, has promised to fast-track voluntary

assisted dying legislation and allow MPs a conscience vote in the state parliament in February. "I believe individuals and families should be empowered to consider all the options available in consultation with their medical professionals," she said.

Euthanasia is already legal in Victoria, has been approved by parliament in Western Australia and will be enacted in 2021, and

is expected to pass through both houses of Tasmania's parliament within weeks. In New Zealand, a referendum on an End of Life Choice Act was held alongside last month's general election, and a "yes" vote means euthanasia will take effect there in 12 months.

Dr John Kleinsman, ethics expert for the NZ Catholic bishops, said the law "has no requirement for palliative care, no mandatory cooling off period, no requirement for independent witnesses, and lacks effective processes for detecting whether people might be opting for a premature death because of ... internal feelings of being a burden, or because of external pressures".

CHINA: Eight Catholic nuns were forced to abandon their convent in Shanxi province, northern China, last week due to repeated harassment by state authorities,

according to UCA News, *writes Ellen Teague.*

State authorities had installed four surveillance cameras to monitor the nuns and regularly entered the convent.

Meanwhile, Catholic sources in Hebei told Asia News that two priests from the unofficial Catholic community of Baoding and more than a dozen seminarians and nuns

from the same community were forcibly taken away by government officials. Two seminarians were released but the whereabouts of the other detainees is unknown.

ROME

Pope Emeritus 'deeply regrets' his support for disgraced order

THE WEEK after Pope Francis toughened up the rules on setting up new orders, it became clear that Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI has distanced himself from an order that he helped establish and recognised in 1977 when, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, he was Archbishop of Munich and Freising, *write Christa Pongratz-Lippitt and Christopher Lamb.*

Pope Francis ruled last week that new religious orders must receive Vatican approval before being established. His amendment to canon law means that local bishops will now need written permission from the Holy See before approving the setting up of communities of Religious in their diocese. It signals that bishops will be required to undertake a more credible and rigorous discernment than was done previously.

Now Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI has expressed regret for his original support for the Catholic Integrated Community (CIC). In an article in the October issue of the German theological monthly, *Herder Korrespondenz*, on the serious abuse in the CIC, he said: "I was obviously not informed – or even deceived – about some of the things in the inner life of the CIC, something I deeply regret. As Archbishop of Munich and Freising, I saw it as my official duty to accompany the CIC and watch over its orthodoxy. At first, I did not realise that in the attempt integrally to shape the things of daily life from the faith, terrible distortions of the faith were possible."

The CIC was accused of serious spiritual abuse in an investigation by the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising in October 2019. The findings have not been published but are in the possession of *Herder Korrespondenz*.

The investigation found that CIC members' relationships and marriages had been manipulated and dissolved for years by the community. "The community assembly decided when a couple was allowed to have children and when not. The decision whether or not they were allowed to have children was sometimes postponed for so long that, in the end, it was no longer possible for them to have any – a wound that could not be healed." Married couples were forced to separate, their children were taken from them or they were expelled.

All the members of the CIC have now resigned.

VIEW FROM ROME

Christopher Lamb



WITH THE election of Joe Biden, a new era is dawning in the relationship between the Holy See and the United States. President-elect Biden and Pope Francis have an opportunity to build a transformative global partnership for the common good in ways that could echo the way Ronald Reagan and Pope St John Paul II worked together to end the Cold War.

Biden, aged 77 and only the second Catholic in history to hold the office of president, is from the same generation as Francis, 83. Both of them were young adults during the Second Vatican Council, both rose to positions of responsibility at relatively young ages and both underwent periods of personal darkness before reaching their positions of "destiny" much later in life.

Francis and Biden both reject the divisive language of nationalist populism, both support multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and both prioritise the need to combat climate change and protect the environment. Unlike President John F. Kennedy, who rarely spoke about his personal faith and was constrained by anti-Catholic prejudice, Biden wears his faith on his sleeve. On the campaign trail, he cited Francis' social encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, and in his victory speech last Saturday quoted Fr Michael Joncas' hymn, "On Eagle's Wings", saying that it "captures the faith that sustains me and which I believe sustains America".

In Rome, news of Biden's election has been welcomed. Tensions between Francis and the Trump administration had been bubbling away for years, and had reached a fever pitch in recent months. In his bid to win Catholic votes President Trump had aligned himself with fringe elements in the US Church, including Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, the former papal envoy to Washington who called on the Pope to resign in 2018. We also saw Secretary of State Mike Pompeo try to pressurise the Vatican not to make a deal with China by writing a highly critical piece in a conservative magazine. This went down very badly inside the Holy See.

Things were not made easier by the presence in Rome of Newt Gingrich, a vocal Trump supporter and the husband of Callista Gingrich, the US Ambassador to the Holy See. Last year, on the eve of the Feast of St Peter and Paul, Callista and her husband posed for a picture with Benedict XVI. It sent a signal, and it was noted by the Vatican. Trump is still vigorously claiming victory in the election, but the Gingriches look to be on their way out, and Biden will appoint an ambassador who shares his vision.

In 2017, the Pope welcomed Trump into

the Apostolic Palace for a private audience and presented him with a copy of *Laudato Si'*. A few days later, the President withdrew the United States from the Paris climate accords.

The word in Rome is that Biden could make a trip to the Vatican early on in his presidency. Francis and Biden don't see eye to eye on everything, but the Pope will now have an ally in the White House.

ONE OUTCOME of the latest Vatican financial scandal is a shift in the balance of power inside the marbled halls of the Roman Curia. Last week, the Pope ruled that the Secretariat of State will lose control of its investment funds. The secretariat oversaw the disastrous €350 million (£311m) London property investment currently under investigation by Vatican prosecutors. Francis has ruled that APSA – the Vatican's asset management arm and central treasury – will now manage the Secretariat of State's funds, which are estimated to be worth hundreds of millions. APSA will in turn report to the Secretariat for the Economy. The Pope also wants the Vatican to divest itself from the London investment and from the Centurion Global Fund that has managed Vatican investments.

The decision is a step towards the centralisation of the Vatican's finances, ending a culture where different departments in the Curia manage their own funds without real accountability. And it takes investment decisions away from priest-officials and puts them in the hands of financial professionals. One of the problems with the London investment fiasco was that complex financial deals were largely handled by clerics. APSA has just appointed Dr Fabio Gasperini, a chartered accountant with 30 years' experience in financial services and a former senior executive at Ernst and Young, as its second most senior official, and Maximino Caballero, another layman, and a former finance executive at US health-care firm Baxter, has a senior role at the Secretariat for the Economy.

THE KNIGHTS of Malta have elected a new leader. He is Fra' Marco Luzzago, 70, who is from Brescia in northern Italy and is a relative of St Paul VI. Following their public battle with Pope Francis at the end of 2016 – which led to the resignation of former Grand Master Matthew Festing – the order has embarked on a process of reform. A new constitution is expected to be discussed and approved next year. Luzzago will serve as a lieutenant of the order for one year, and could one day be elected Grand Master.

NEWS BRIEFING

FROM BRITAIN AND IRELAND

PHOTO: PA, STEVE PARSONS



Archbishops' apology

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have apologised to **LGBT people** for suffering they have undergone as a result of the Church of England's actions, in a new report about faith and sexuality. "Living in Love and Faith" was commissioned in 2017 after General Synod rejected a House of Bishops' report that urged the Church to oppose same-sex marriage. In their foreword, Archbishops Justin Welby (pictured) and Stephen Cottrell write of the Church's treatment of LGBT people: "We have caused, and continue to cause, hurt and unnecessary suffering. For such acts, each of us, and the Church collectively, should be deeply ashamed and repentant. As archbishops, we are personally very sorry where we have contributed to this."

Research by the Centre for the Art of Dying Well at St Mary's University, Twickenham, has

found that the **pandemic** has made grieving for the dead more difficult. Restrictions around funerals or cremations, combined with social distancing, are making mourning harder, according to a poll that was carried out by Savanta ComRes ahead of Remembrance Sunday.

The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle has responded to criticism of its decision to move its bishop's residence to a six-bedroom property with a gym and sun terrace in an affluent part of **Newcastle**, which was on the market for £935,000. In a statement, the diocese said the building would replace the larger East Denton Hall, currently used as the bishop's residence, and would also function as an administrative office. Bishop Robert Byrne "had no part" in the decision, according to the diocese, which was approved by the Board of Trustees.

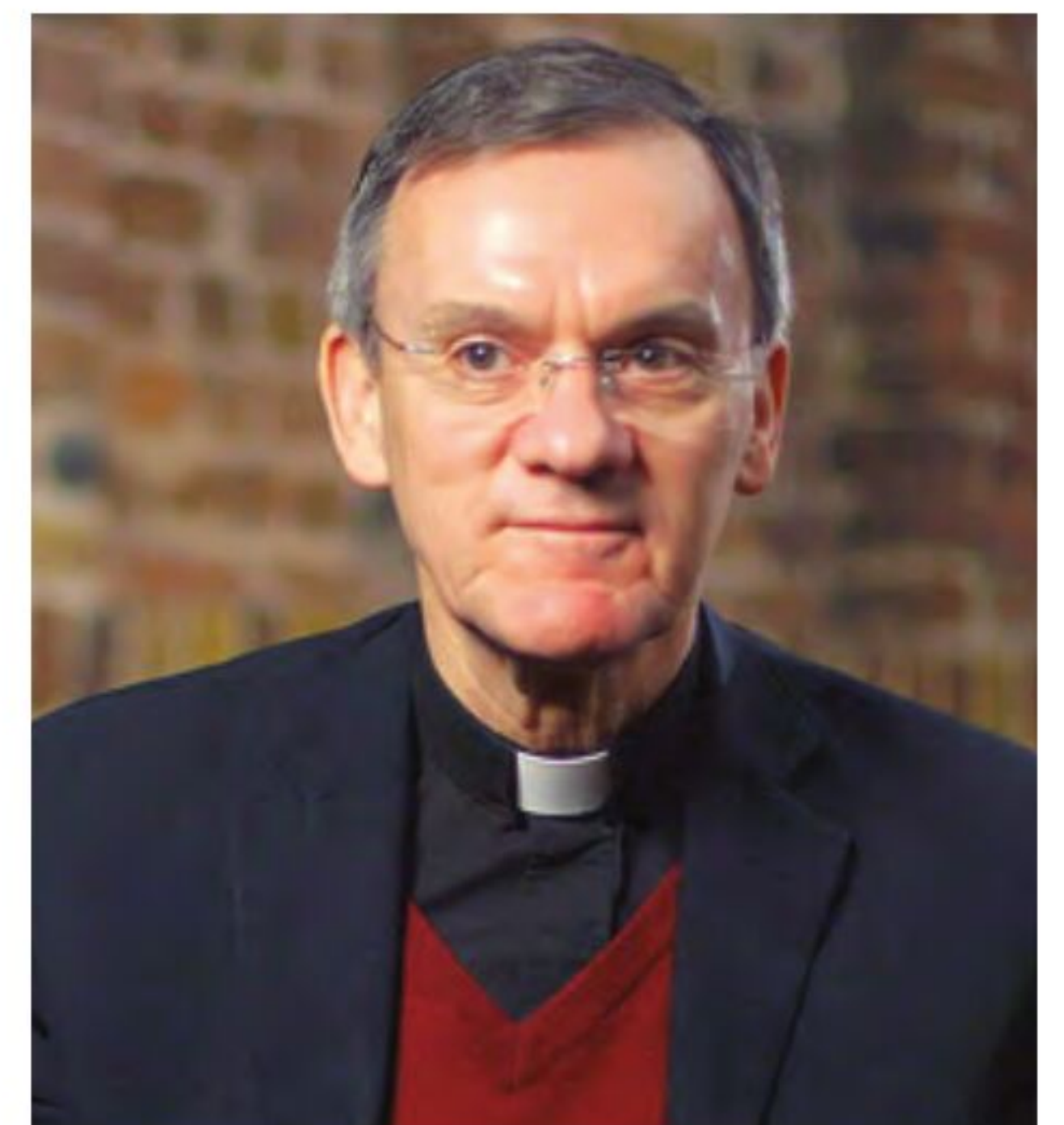
The censured Redemptorist priest **Fr Tony Flannery** has revealed that his superior general, Fr Michael Brehl, told him that "it must have been somebody very high up in the Irish Church" who reported him to the Vatican, which resulted in him being withdrawn from ministry in 2012. In an online talk to We Are Church Ireland, Voices of Faith and the Catholic Women's Council, the 73-year-

old priest explained that the Redemptorists withdrew him because of pressure from the Vatican, and also because the order's general council believed that had they not removed him, the Vatican would have removed the superior general and put someone of their own choosing in his place.

Isolation is the most damaging aspect of the pandemic for elderly rural priests in **Ireland**, according to a spokesperson for the Association of Catholic Priests. In an online presentation, Fr Tim Hazelwood said that some priests were only contacted by a diocese about "money or data protection or things like that, but it is left up to us to find the support we need". Fr Hazelwood said that some priests have been upset by "very hurtful criticism" from "Mass-hoppers" who go from one online Mass to another, passing comments on priests' "performances".

The Bishop of Plymouth has asked his parishes to renew their **focus on mission** in a reflection document called "A Precious Place of God's Grace" that will shape the future of the diocese. Produced by Bishop Mark O'Toole and his council, it looks ahead "to 2025 in terms of parish structures, availability of priests, provision of sacramental life and the

resources needed to meet the evangelising mission of the Church in the Diocese of Plymouth". Lay people, Religious and clergy of the diocese are invited to participate in a journey of discernment that will conclude with proposals about pastoral provision in each deanery.



Climate change plea

Bishop John Arnold (pictured), environment lead for the bishops' conference, has joined over 60 UK faith leaders in writing to the Prime Minister calling on the Government to deliver new, ambitious plans to tackle climate change. The UK has the presidency for the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference to be held in **Glasgow** in November 2021. Faith leaders say the UK has a key role to play rallying countries to take steps to limit the global temperature rise this century.

Compiled by **Liz Dodd**.

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PERSON IN THE NEWS



Yogi Sutton, Catholic Association for Racial Justice chair, on inclusivity: “[Black Catholics] should be part of the decision-making, holding positions of responsibility in the Church.” (See page 30)

IICSA / Survivors call for mandatory reporting and independent safeguarding body

Damning abuse inquiry report finds Church failed victims

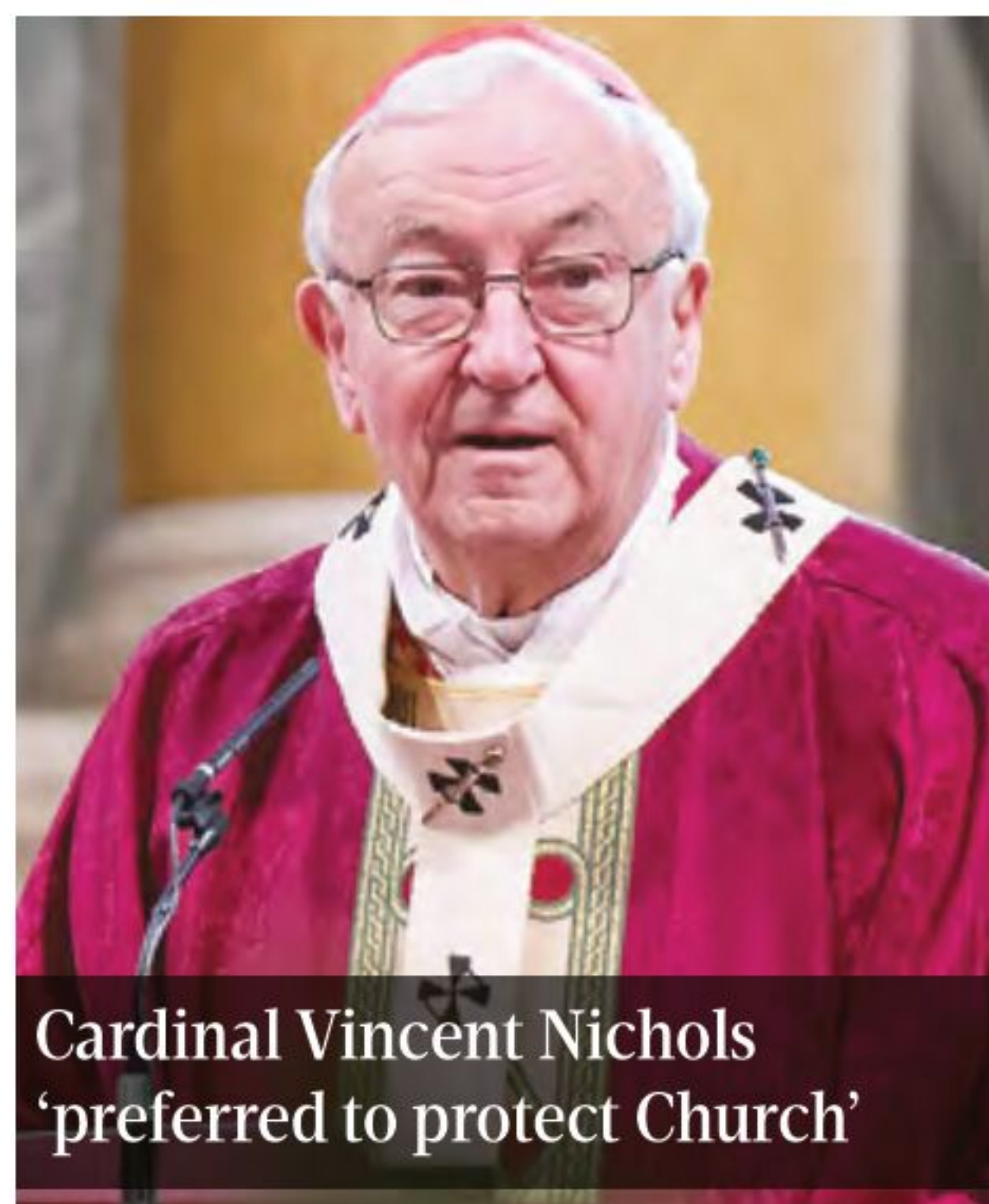
CATHERINE PEPINSTER

SURVIVORS of child sexual abuse by Catholic priests, monks and other church figures have called for mandatory reporting of assaults in the wake of a damning report into the Catholic Church, which accuses it of repeated failures to protect the vulnerable and having more interest in its own reputation.

In an exclusive open letter, given to *The Tablet*, 20 survivors of abuse appeal for mandatory reporting and an independent body to be responsible for the oversight of safeguarding in the Catholic Church.

The official report, from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), says that the Church’s moral purpose has been betrayed not only by those who abused children but also by those who turned a blind eye to the assaults and failed to take action against the perpetrators. It says that the Church prioritised its own reputation.

It has particularly harsh words for Cardinal Vincent Nichols, whose record as Archbishop of Birmingham from 2000 to 2009, and then as Archbishop of Westminster, was examined by



Cardinal Vincent Nichols ‘preferred to protect Church’

the inquiry. It says that although he apologised for the Church’s failings during an IICSA hearing in 2018, he did not show any personal responsibility or compassion for victims in the recent cases it examined.

The report said that Cardinal Nichols’ “acknowledgement that ‘there is plenty for us to achieve’ applies as much to him as it does to everyone else in the Church. He did not always exercise the leadership expected of a senior member of the Church, at times preferring to protect the reputation of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales and in Rome.”

Richard Scorer, of Slater and Gordon solicitors, who represented

32 survivors during the IICSA hearings, said this week that Cardinal Nichols should resign.

“This is a Church that cannot be trusted to protect children,” Mr Scorer said. “The only way forward now is a mandatory reporting law, so that abuse cannot be covered up, and independent external oversight of church safeguarding.”

However, on Monday, the day before the report was published, Cardinal Nichols issued a statement in which he said that as was the custom in the run-up to his seventy-fifth birthday, on 8 November, he had tendered his resignation to Pope Francis as an archbishop. But Pope Francis had indicated he should stay in office for the time being. Cardinal Nichols wrote: “So, on we go!”

The 147-page IICSA report says that between 1970 and 2015, the Catholic Church in England and Wales received more than 900 complaints involving 3,000 sexual abuse incidents, but it believes that the scale of abuse in the past 50 years is much higher.

It also noted that there have been more than 100 allegations of abuse reported every year since. Abuse was swept under the carpet, said the report.

Although the report focuses on England and Wales it was also critical of the Holy See, especially the failure of the apostolic nuncio to provide a witness statement.

The report did acknowledge efforts by the Church in England and Wales to reform child protection and improvements made such as more formal handling of reports of abuse, better training for the clergy and Religious and those involved in safeguarding. But the progress was far too slow, with one of the Cumberlege Commission reforms 13 years overdue and efforts to set up the Safe Spaces pastoral and therapeutic support project jointly with the Church of England taking six years.

The IICSA report makes seven recommendations, although it is leaving its comments on mandatory reporting to its final report on child sexual abuse, which will examine the problem across society. It urges mandatory safeguarding training, a lead cleric on safeguarding, policies on non-compliance on safeguarding, external auditing of safeguarding, a review of the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service, a national policy for complaints, and a revision to canon law on crimes against the child.

On Tuesday Cardinal Nichols, as president of the bishops’ conference, and Archbishop Malcolm McMahon, vice president, said in a statement that the IICSA report would “inform the ongoing reform and improvement of safeguarding in all aspects of the Church’s life” and would be discussed at the bishops’ plenary session next week.

Cardinal leads tributes to former Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks

CARDINAL Vincent Nichols has paid tribute to the former Chief Rabbi, Lord (Jonathan) Sacks, who has died at the age of 72, writes *Ruth Gledhill*.

A prolific author and regular contributor to programmes such as BBC Radio 4’s *Thought for the Day*, Lord Sacks had recently been diagnosed with cancer.

Cardinal Nichols said: “I mourn the death of Jonathan Sacks. I

express my sorrow to the worldwide Jewish community on the loss of this great figure. I have lost a friend; the Jewish community a great leader; humanity an eloquent spokesman.”

He described Lord Sacks as “a most eloquent proponent of some of the greatest truths of humanity, so often forgotten ... I recall some of his forceful and persuasive presentations of the truths

expressed in Judaism and indeed in the Christian faith, truths which help us to make sense of our lives, our communities and our destinies.”

He recalled his meeting with Benedict XVI at St Mary’s University, Twickenham, during his visit to Britain in 2010 when Lord Sacks said: “What led to secularisation was that people lost faith in the ability of people of faith to live peaceably together; and we must never go down that road again.”

Lord Sacks often acknowledged the significance of *Nostra aetate*,

the Second Vatican Council document on relationships with non-Christian faiths, which declared that “the Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from Holy Scripture”.

The Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, described Lord Sacks as “an extraordinary ambassador for Judaism” whose “remarkable legacy will live on in the hearts and minds of the countless people he inspired”.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said “we are all the beneficiaries of his wisdom”.

DIVERSITY

Racial justice activists ask for church support

THE CATHOLIC Association for Racial Justice (Carj) has called on the bishops' conference to reverse its decision to stop the Racial Justice Sunday collection from going directly to the organisation, writes *Ellen Teague*.

Carj received the collection for three decades until, three years ago, it ceased to be an agency of the conference.

It still receives some support for projects from these funds, but at an online AGM last weekend members described the move as a "wound", and asked if it might be reversed in light of recent global action for racial justice.

Around 40 participants – including Bishop Paul McAleenan, auxiliary in Westminster and lead bishop on migration – heard how Carj's work has increased exponentially this year, with the publication of a number of reports on disadvantaged and marginalised groups, including Traveller and inner-city communities.

Bishop McAleenan told *The Tablet* he found Carj's offer to run workshops for seminaries "admirable". Carj's chair, Yogi Sutton, said that "the very obvious need for pro-racial justice work within the Church calls on all of us for even greater efforts and much more funds".

In addition, Mrs Sutton felt Black Catholics "should be part of the decision-making, holding positions of responsibility" in the Church.

The AGM also heard from the Revd Azariah France-Williams, author of *Ghost Ship: Institutional Racism and the Church of England*, who encouraged Catholics to reflect on institutional racism within Catholic structures.

Bishop McAleenan acknowledged that "strategies, efforts and attitudes need to convey to all comers a sense of belonging, that the Church is their home".

Fr Paschal Uche, a young Black priest in Brentwood diocese, said: "Mostly people don't stick around and they go to other denominations to be themselves. We lost the diversity we are supposed to have."

PUBLIC WORSHIP / Churches are 'sources of solace and help', say prelates

Unite for daily prayer during lockdown, urge bishops

RUTH GLEDHILL

CARDINAL Vincent Nichols and the bishops of England and Wales are calling for Catholics to join a "national shared moment of prayer" at 6 p.m. each day during lockdown.

In a statement last week, Cardinal Nichols and the Archbishop of Liverpool, Malcolm McMahon, urged Catholics to respect the regulations that forbid people gathering for communal worship in churches.

In their statement, the bishops said: "Despite profound misgivings, it is important that we, as responsible citizens, observe these regulations, which have the force of law: 'Remind them to be obedient to the officials in authority; to be ready to do good at every opportunity' (Titus 3:1). We do this in solidarity with so many others on whom are being imposed restrictions which impact severely on their lives and livelihoods."

"It is also important to recognise that these regulations are not an



attack on religious belief.

"However, they do demonstrate a fundamental lack of understanding of the essential contribution made by faith communities to the wellbeing, resilience and health of our society."

They call on Catholics to "make full use of our churches as places of individual prayer and sources of solace and help".

"We must sustain each other in our patterns of prayer," they continued, "joining a national shared moment of prayer each day at 6 p.m., and observing the Vigil of Christ the King (21 November) as a day of prayer for the ending

of this pandemic ... This pathway of prayer and service is the royal road we are to take as a gracious witness in our society today."

Ordinariate priest Fr David Palmer has made clear his opposition to the suspension of public worship in a series of tweets.

Announcing the precise times at which his church will be open for private prayer, he said: "You may of course individually decide to unite your prayers with the sacrifice of the Mass (that is your individual choice)."

"After Fr David has offered Mass, those who individually choose to do so may come forward for Holy Communion, which Cardinal Sarah (head of the Congregation for Divine Worship) has said no one can stop a priest from administering."

However, he later tweeted: "I have been asked by the bishop not to offer private Mass while the Church is open for private prayer. He had great empathy for my position, but still felt he had to ask me to desist."

Irish businessman launches legal challenge to Mass ban

ARCHBISHOP Diarmuid Martin of Dublin has said the Church has "every right" to appeal for the suspension of public worship to be kept to the shortest possible time, writes *Sarah Mac Donald*.

During his online Mass for the 19 priests who have died in the Archdiocese of Dublin over the past year, Archbishop Martin acknowledged: "We live in difficult and changing times. The experience of the pandemic leaves us uncertain."

He warned that there is a danger that the experience of insecurity generated by the pandemic "can lead us to become inward-looking as individuals and as a Church".

His comments were made as Irish businessman Declan Ganley

mounted a legal challenge against the current ban on public worship in the Republic.

The 52-year-old entrepreneur, who is known for his Catholic faith, has initiated proceedings against the minister of health, arguing that the current restrictions on public worship breach the constitutional right to religious freedom. The case has been postponed until 8 December.

However, Level 5 restrictions are due to be lifted on 1 December. If the government decides to place the country under Level 1 or 2 restrictions, public worship will continue. But if it opts for Level 3, the suspension of public worship will continue.

In the Republic, places of worship remain open for private

prayer, but religious services must be held online.

The only exceptions are funerals and weddings, which can be attended by 25 people.

Those lobbying for a resumption of public worship argue that there has been no evidence that gatherings for Masses have contributed to the spread of the virus, provided people have adhered to social distancing and other public health guidance, such as wearing masks.

This was a point made by Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh at the meeting of the four archbishops, along with Bishop Dermot Farrell of Ossory, with the Taoiseach Micheál Martin last month to discuss the ban on public worship.

At the meeting, all agreed on the importance of ongoing constructive engagement, but the government has so far resisted calls for a relaxation of the ban on churches allowing people to gather for religious services.

THE TABLET WEBINARS

Philanthropy: From Aristotle to Zuckerberg



Webinar where the distinguished political commentator Edward Stourton will interview the best selling author Paul Valley on his latest book which delivers an original and groundbreaking exploration of historical and contemporary philanthropy.

THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2020 | 6.00-7.00PM GMT

Webinar with Mary McAleese and Ed Stourton



The Tablet is delighted to host the ground breaking two-term president of Ireland, Mary McAleese for an hour long discussion with the distinguished political commentator Edward Stourton. Mary will talk about her latest book, *Here's the Story: A Memoir* as well as building bridges though justice, social equality, social inclusion, anti-sectarianism and reconciliation. She will also discuss challenging misogyny within the Catholic Church.

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Matthew 25:36

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Cheesy cheer

ROSE PRINCE

WHEN THE first snows fall in the Franche-Comté region of eastern France, the dairies begin to make Vacherin Mont d'Or. We think of it as the Christmas cheese, soft, with a wrinkly rind, and enveloped in a strip of spruce. Its seasonal character goes back to when it was impossible to move milk out of this mountainous area once the bad weather set in. The milk was instead transformed into this simple, fresh, oozy cheese, one that would be at its best in winter.

To earn the name Vacherin Mont d'Or, the cheese must be made with milk from Montbéliarde cows. Never heard of them? These are – to my mind – the world's "supercow". They are extremely hardy, their strong legs and feet enabling them to live outside barns in what can be a challenging landscape. They produce the high-protein milk essential for making a high-value cheese, and they are also good beef cows.

Montbéliarde herds are on the increase in Britain. The timing could not be more apt. UK dairy farming has struggled economically for decades. The margins in milk production are feeble compared to other sectors of agriculture, and thousands of dairies have gone out of business in recent years. But there are success stories, always associated with "value added". Artisan dairy has been hugely successful. Britain's farmhouse cheeses now command worldwide respect, and sales are on the increase.



Baked cheese is a relatively novel Christmas tradition. Essentially, it is a very easy, hot and creamy dip

No cheesemaker can work without quality milk, and the Holsteins and Friesians that have been UK dairy farmers' go-to cow for decades are, frankly, not up to it. They produce a lot of milk per cow, but little butterfat. And they die young, unlike the Montbéliarde.

One British dairy has learned to make its very own version of Vacherin. Winslade cheese is a combination of Vacherin style with a Camembert edge to it. It is made in Hampshire by master cheesemaker Stacey Hedges, famous for her other cheese, Tunworth. When I tasted it at the Tisbury delicatessen recently, I thought it even better than the best Vacherin.

Baked cheese is a relatively novel Christmas tradition. Essentially, it is a very easy, hot and creamy dip for toast and sturdy leaves such as chicory. My recipe for November is adapted from a contribution to *A Taste of Home: 120 Delicious Recipes from Leading Chefs and Celebrities*, published last month by The Passage, to commemorate 40 years of serving homeless people.

BAKED WINSLADE CHEESE WITH TRUFFLE HONEY

SERVES 4

1 Winslade cheese (230g from thecourtyarddairy.co.uk)
2 tbsp truffle honey
A few sprigs of fresh thyme
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

To serve: chicory leaves, ciabatta or sourdough toast

Preheat the oven to 200C. Place the cheese on a baking tray, cutting away the surface rind. Spoon the truffle honey on top and sprinkle over some thyme leaves. Season well with salt and pepper then bake for about 15 minutes until gooey. To eat, dip the bread and chicory leaves into the molten cheese.

A Taste of Home is available from passage.org.uk for £25. All profits will support the work of The Passage.

Glimpses of Eden

JONATHAN TULLOCH

IT WAS THE afternoon before the second lockdown began, and we'd gathered in the communal gardens to enjoy the sunshine and a last hour together. The grass was studded with colourful fungi. Three birches stood just behind our bench, and whenever a breeze blew through their scant fiery foliage, they seemed to whisper to each other. A gust brought down the last few leaves, revealing the graceful work of art that is a winter birch. We could also see the hole where a woodpecker had nested – it's only when leaves fall that trees share their



secrets. We opened our sandwiches and a robin instantly arrived. Looking for crumbs, it flew right to our feet. All the while, starlings whistled from the chimney pots

bordering the tranquil little gardens. On sunny days, they'll sing like this until spring: winter is their courting time.

A clatter of jackdaws flew over. Jackdaws love playing in the wind. A pair broke off from the tangle and landed together on a television aerial. Jackdaws mate for life, and in the coming weeks we'll often see them perched side by side. Growing bolder, the robin jumped up on to our bench, before snatching a crumb and skimming away. Isolation? We never need be alone, when we have our winter companions.

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